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MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

MRS. ELIZABETH HAMILTON.

WITH

A SELECTION FROM

HER CORRESPONDENCE,

AND OTHER

UNPUBLISHED WRITINGS.

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BY MISS BENGER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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SELECTIONS

FROM THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

Mrs. HAMILTON.

To Mrs. ——.

Bath, April, 1801.

How sweetly, yet how forcibly, did my dearest friend's kindly solicitous letter touch my heart! I feel that I am not worthy half of what you feel for me; and yet there is not an earthly good that I would not sooner part with than one particle of your affection. I hasten to put an end to all your anxiety on my account, by giving you the assurance of my complete recovery. Clifton did much more for me than I expected: even the chilling breezes, so much complained of by others, were to me medicinal; and though they

prevented me from going out to enjoy the beauties of the country, had the happy effect of restoring my lungs to a proper tone. Our poor friend ———, who was my only visitor, lost his wife whilst I remained there; after which I was quite in solitude. But books, for a certain length of time, are a charming substitute for common conversation. I do not know that I ever read one from which my mind received a higher degree of pleasure than *Currie's Life of Burns.* To me, its charm was enhanced by a thousand pleasing recollections, — a thousand associations, that gave a strong additional interest to every word. The strength of Burns's feelings, the character of his mind, had excited an enthusiastic admiration, at a period when my own enthusiastic feelings were in perfect unison with those of the poet; and in him alone did I meet with the expression of a sensibility in which I could perfectly sympathise: in his emotions there was a strength, an energy, that came home to my heart;

while the tender sorrows of all other poets had to me appeared mawkish and insipid. Even the strong light in which he saw the ridiculous, was, I fear, too agreeable to me. The idea I then formed of his mind has been confirmed by Dr. Currie's delineation of it. A mind conscious of superior powers, but placed by fortune in an inferior situation, must not only have uncommon magnanimity, but a judgment highly cultivated, to insulate itself, and stand, in a manner, alone in society. Poor Burns! wounded pride sought for solace in gratifications which called forth his animal spirits; these, unnaturally excited, called forth passion, and the man became degraded from the very same cause that would in other circumstances have exalted him; for I am persuaded, that had Burns been placed in an independent station, he would never have sunk into vice. He is, however, only one of a thousand instances which incontestably prove the inutility of

genius, either to promote the happiness of the possessor, or to produce much good to society. It is in vain that we look to second causes: all leads us to the Almighty Ruler, who adjusts the balance. But where am I wandering? I began only to say that I liked the book, and I have been beguiled into writing an essay.

To Miss B——.

Rivers-street, Bath, Oct. 10. 1803.

Surely my dear friend must ere now have given me up as the most ungrateful of mortals, and concluded that the cold air of the north had congealed every genial feeling of the heart. There, however, the conclusion would be erroneous; for that heart is as warm, and as warmly attached to its dear B—— as ever; and soon I hope to have an opportunity of convincing her of this truth by *viva voce* evidence at the fireside in Russel-street. It is time to give some account of myself, and of my wanderings, which are now happily concluded,

and at present appear to my mind like a pleasant dream. When you know more of our Edinburgh friends, you will be better able to calculate the regret we felt at leaving them; but I cannot describe it.

On the 23d of August we bade farewell to the chosen seat of genius, and proceeded by Lanark, in order to gratify ourselves with a view of the celebrated falls of the Clyde, which more than answered our expectations, though they were very highly raised. Never did any of Nature's works produce in my mind such emotions of sublimity, such solemn and awful delight. Never can the impression made in the two hours we spent there be obliterated. But, alas! we were forced to recollect, that the wearied horses and their driver partook not of our feelings, and, in compassion to them, were obliged to proceed. The country was, however, still interesting, and our whole journey to Keswick delightful.

At Keswick we met Mr. and Mrs. G——, and spent a fortnight with them there very agreeably. We got very pleasant lodgings, commanding a view of the lake; and though I was unable to stir out the first week, I made such good use of my time in the second, as to see every part of the charming scenery, which, I must confess, is very fine; but my partiality for Windermere is not in the least abated, and to it I shall give a decided preference. We went by Ambleside to Coniston, and spent two days with the ever-charming S——s;—found them all at home, improved in spirits, and enjoying an increase of fortune and of comforts, in which we truly rejoiced. From them we proceeded to Calgarth, where we had the kindest and most friendly reception;—spent a delightful day, as you may imagine, enlivened as it was by the animated conversation of the Bishop, and graced by the polite attentions of his amiable family. At night we reached

Bowness; and no sooner stopt at the White Lion than we had all the family about us, man, woman, and child; then came the old washerwoman, the boatman, —in short, if we had come to spend a revenue among them, they could not have given us a more cordial welcome. I pity the heart that would not have been penetrated by the simple kindness of these honest people. Mrs. B—— and you were enquired for by all, particularly by the B——s, who came immediately to see us. We gave a day to wandering through all our old haunts, and at every step thought of you. I should have been happy to have spent some longer time, but the approach of winter forbade. We set out the 14th for Manchester, or rather for Greenhill, the seat of Mr. J——s, two miles from Manchester. There we intended to stay a day or two, but found it impossible to get away from our kind friends till the elapse of nearly three weeks. We then left them with regret; and on

Saturday evening found ourselves in Rivers-street, and I need not say were happy in again meeting the dear friends from whom we had been so long parted.

To Miss B——.

March, 1808.

Alas! my dear friend, how little did I imagine, when I wrote my last hasty scrawl that such a mournful event was near at hand! It was for yourself, and for my dear Mrs. G——, that I alone felt anxious; for often as I have by experience been taught the truth of Young's observations, and seen "the feeble wrap the athletic in his shroud," I still am tempted to look on apparent health as a security against the approach of sudden change. Since my constitution was first apparently broken, how many of my friends in the full vigour of life have fallen! How many have, within the space of one twelvemonth, been numbered with the dead! The last stroke has

been to me the heaviest. It is so on every account; for, besides what I feel for dear Mrs. G——, which you can well estimate, I was attached to our departed friend by all the ties of gratitude and affection. His memory is endeared to me by acts of kindness that shall never be forgotten: nor has he left behind him a man in whose friendship I can place an equal degree of confidence. * But thank God, that in mourning for him, we may mingle with our tears the triumph of hope! It is here, my dear

* The friend whose loss is here deplored, was not more distinguished by his own literary talents, than by the spontaneous liberality with which he seized every opportunity to procure for the talents of others, private encouragement, or public patronage. That a man of his various powers and attainments should have been sensible to the attractions of kindred merit, was naturally to be expected; but it was the rare and peculiar attribute of his character, that his warmest partialities were engaged by misfortune; and whilst in the comprehensive spirit of philanthropy, he was accustomed to advocate the general interests of mankind, he gave his heart to unfriended worth, and reserved his warmest welcome for meritorious though unhonoured poverty.

B——, that the doctrines of Christianity strike like a sunbeam on the darkness of the soul, supporting us by the view of that immortality which I verily believe to have been purchased for us by the Son of God. Such expressions have been debased by enthusiasm, till they have become offensive from being connected with ideas of vulgarity. But when we are led seriously to examine the basis in which our hopes of future existence rest, we shall be convinced they have no other solid foundation than faith in Jesus Christ. All arguments for the immortality of the human soul, drawn from a view of its faculties, are equally applicable to the brutes that perish. Those deduced from our hopes, and fears, and wishes, are no less futile. They may serve to amuse, but they never can convince. If it is then only in revelation that we are to learn all that the human mind can know, with regard to futurity, we must believe the doctrine that is there taught, or reject it

in toto. The longer I live, my views upon this subject become more and more serious. But I think they are still as far as ever removed from gloomy enthusiasm; nor do I believe that the study of the Scriptures ever begot enthusiasm, or any thing like it. They give the assurance of hope, the placid tranquillity that arises from perfect confidence. By teaching us to extend our views beyond this world, they divert its painful events of the power to wound; and by teaching us to subdue the pride of our own hearts, they break down the barrier that is for ever rising between us and our fellow creatures.

To Mrs. ——.

Lisburn, Ireland, 1813.

It is a grievous circumstance to have been so long shut out from all intercourse with my dearest friends, and indeed with all friends in the great island; for since my

removal to Ireland I have heard from none, nor have I had time till now to write a letter. This has been to me and my companions a summer of great enjoyment; our excursion throughout has been productive of more than expected pleasure: besides the gratification derived from seeing many beautiful places, and being introduced to many estimable characters, we have been flattered by distinguished kindness, having every where been treated with a degree of attention as unmerited as unlooked for. As a proof of the hospitality we have experienced, I need only tell you, that we have travelled nearly 300 miles without having had occasion to sleep or eat at an inn.

I was charmed with Dublin and its environs, and pleased with the society, which, as far as we saw of it, was indeed delightful. About 20 miles from Dublin, in that part of the county of Wicklow which has long been celebrated for its romantic scenery;

one of the places deemed most worthy of being visited by strangers, is the seat of Mr. P. L——; all our friends were anxious that we should see it, but we had no right to expect an invitation. Mrs. L——, however, came to Dublin on purpose to invite us to spend some days there, that she might have an opportunity of shewing us all the beauties of the country. We went accordingly to the princely mansion, prepared by description to find every thing magnificent; but the grandeur of the place, the style of the establishment, even the beauty of the county, much as they excited our admiration, were all as nothing compared to the wonders effected by the heaven-directed efforts of Mrs. L——, in the moral improvement of all that part of the community which falls within the reach of her influence. What a creative fancy might imagine, of transforming the appearance, the character, and the habits of a people, she has realized: the example she has set

is not given in vain. We afterwards witnessed, in many instances, its good effects; and perceived a spirit of improvement, which, if not checked by the violence of *party feuds*, will soon work an astonishing change throughout the country. We really run some risque of being spoiled by this Irish jaunt; but in spite of temptation, have determined to avail ourselves of the next morning light for our return to Scotland.

To the same.

December, 1815, Edinburgh.

O that I had power to speak consolation to my dear afflicted friend, whose sorrows have pierced my heart! but, alas! how ineffectual is sympathy! how little can it do towards relieving the anguish of a wounded spirit! There is only one friend, one physician of the soul, who can in such moments pour the balm of comfort, and give

strength to enable those who most severely suffer, to bear with patience and fortitude whatever the divine Wisdom has been pleased to inflict. When *He* has, in mercy, restored the exhausted spirits, and collected the scattered thoughts, then will my dear friend, following the angel spirit to the regions of everlasting bliss, perceive that, escaping from the frail and perishable mansion in which the soul was exposed to the evils and calamities of life, she has made an exchange, of which the advantages are infinite and incalculable. She has left us all only to go a little while before us, to take possession of that inheritance, in which we also shall be made partakers, and where, in a few short years, she will be re-united to all she loved on earth, never to be parted more. Were it not for these hopes, what would become of us in the hour of trial! but, having this anchor of the soul sure and stedfast,

we feel the certain assurance that all the promises of the gospel shall be fulfilled; — a harbour to which we can retreat for shelter, amid the storms of adversity, and the spring-tide of grief. It is by the weakness of this mortal body, by the feelings and sensations which belong to our present nature, that we are prevented from deriving all the benefits which we ought to derive from the comfortable assurances of the gospel: but it is cheering to reflect, that this imperfect state will be of no long duration; and what glorious motives have we for endeavouring to endure unto the end! and what gracious promises of assistance in the performance of that duty! Such trains of thought will naturally present themselves to the mind of my dearest friend, as it regains some degree of composure. They have lately been familiarized to mine by a series of afflictions; for I have, indeed, had sorrow upon sorrow.

I have promised to go to Bath as soon as the season is sufficiently advanced for me to take the journey. I shall then see you, my own dear friend, if it please God to grant me health: for I shall probably go by London; if not by London, I shall at least visit you as soon as possible. My eyes have got very ill, and will scarcely serve me to finish. So farewell.

Ever thine,

E. H.*

To H. M., Esq.

11. Russel Street, Nov. 24. 1801.

Thank you, thank you, for the many happy *strokes* of wit and humour ardently given while the metal was in a proper state for being worked to advantage. Now that you have found out its proper *temper*, I hope you will continue to strike while the

* This was almost the last letter ever written by Mrs. Hamilton.

iron is hot, that I may again enjoy those brilliant sparks produced by the collision.

To carry on your metallic metaphor, I must tell you (what, indeed, you will probably discover before you get to the end of my epistle), that my poor brains have been of late so completely fused in the furnace of metaphysics, that they have become a complete *calx*. I have been obliged, in pursuit of *hints*, to wade through volumes: keeping neither common-place book nor memorandum, have been forced to stupify myself in search of passages which remained in my memory, while every trace of the place in which I had found them was lost. To make amends to myself for this unpleasant task, I have purchased your friend *Currie's Life of Burns;* which, I confess, has operated like a charm on my benumbed imagination. Never have I been more highly gratified than by the perusal of his inestimable work, which is a *chef-d'œuvre* of cultivated

and discriminating taste. On reading the poems that are added to the collection, I once more tasted of all that delicious enthusiasm with which the first productions of this child of nature and genius had feasted my soul. Nor should I have been able to account for my own feelings, had they not been explained to me by my friend Mr. W., the ingenious lecturer on natural philosophy, who, in expounding the nature of concords, showed us how instruments tuned in unison were made to vibrate, as soon as we touched the correspondent note. To this law of nature I ascribe the obduracy of my heart, which can so often remain unmoved at the highly-wrought representation of the distress of princesses and heroes, while a few simple couplets of Mac Neill or Burns can melt it into tenderness, and suffuse my eyes with tears. Their descriptions of nature touch the vibrating chord, which it seems is not in unison with heroics. The simplicity of the Scottish dialect is, surely,

infinitely better adapted to such descriptions, than the cold refinement of modern language;* and I make no doubt that the truth of this will be made so fully evident to people of taste by your works, in addition to those of Burns and Ramsay, that I do not despair of seeing the study of *gude braid Scotch* made a part of polite education. It is a shame in our own country to find how few can read their *native* tongue with any ease or propriety. I am dying to be acquainted with Dr. Currie, and greatly regret that the nature of his profession denies me all hopes of his ever appearing at this place of general rendezvous. Should I ever again visit the North, I think I shall find that Liverpool lies in my way.

I hope you have before this received from Messrs. Bell and Bradefute a copy of the Memoirs which Mr. R. desired them to send you. A third edition is now printing,

the second having been disposed of in less than two months. If money is the substance, and honour the shadow, R. will be the greatest gainer by my labours; but, as I have had all I asked from him, I have no reason to complain. Whatever I demanded for my new work, he would have complied with; and, on this account, my friends abuse me for having made a foolish bargain. It only, however, extends to the first volume. If *that* sells well, I shall know how to bargain for the second; though, I confess, I would rather write the whole book than *higgle* about the price. I might justly be accused of affectation, did I not confess that I have been highly gratified by the success of the Memoirs. An acquaintance with the celebrated characters to which they have been the means of introducing me, I should, in the fond hours of sanguine hope, have considered as the *ne ptus ultra* of felicity.

While seated by the burn-side, at my own dear Crook, had some genii represented to me the Marquis of L. and Governor P. vying with each other who should pay me the handsomest compliment, in the most elegant stile of flattery, how would the little demon of vanity have fluttered in my heart! But if at the same time the glass had been held up, so as to show me my gouty foot bound up in flannel, and told me that I must never more expect "to brush with hasty step the dewy lawn," never more to taste the pleasure of a solitary ramble, or that lightsomeness of heart which health alone inspires, should I have thanked the genii? No, no; I should have turned with disgust from the representation. So wisely are the things in this life ordered!

Still where rosy pleasure leads,
See a kindred grief pursue!
Behind the steps that misery treads,
Approaching comfort view!

The hues of bliss now brightly glow,
Chastised by sable tints of woe,
And blended form, in artful strife,
The strength and harmony of life.

These lines have flown to my pen before I was aware; but as I could put nothing better in their place, I shall make no apology for introducing them. Indeed, the extreme pain I have suffered these last twenty-four hours, and am still suffering, by an unwelcome visit from the *foul fiend*, y'clept *gout*, makes me glad to have recourse to any one's compositions to make out my own. To-morrow may produce better things; so for to-morrow I shall wait.

The wished-for morrow is arrived, and has brought a relief from torture, and a renovation of strength and spirits. Were it not, indeed, for the kind aid afforded by the latter, this poor, shattered bark could never have borne the buffetting of so many cruel storms. Yet how often have these

spirits been mistaken for the production of unfeeling levity! Have you, at no period of our acquaintance, been ever led into this mistake? I well remember our friend Mrs. I. B., who, at a time when my heart was suffering a degree of anguish, greater perhaps than any event of life ought to have inflicted on a reasonable being, referred to me as an example of one who "had never been *wae* in all her days." You are indebted for all this egotism to a train of thought which has beguiled the tedium of two sleepless nights, and which has led me back through all the scenes of my past life; — a life which appears so void of incident and adventure, that to have conceived the idea of leaving a sketch of it behind me, may seem ridiculous. I am, however, convinced, that to my own sex at least it might convey instruction; nor is an accurate account of the formation of those associations which form the character, beneath the attention of the philosopher. If, there-

fore, Mr. *Gout* (whom I have long expected kindly to give me my *quietus* at a moment's warning) does not prevent me, you may expect to have this posthumous volume to add to your collection.

As I have promised to revise and correct the *Rajah* for another edition, I do not wish you to have a copy of that now in print. The *Letters on Education* you will receive the moment they appear; but the printing goes on so slowly, that some weeks must elapse. I need not say how happy I shall be to receive your poetical works. I am not now so foolish as when I would not ask you for a copy of some verses you once read to us, though I would have given all the few goods in my possession for it. I forgot to mention in my last, that you were extremely welcome to make what use you pleased of the little *impromptu* I sent you with a view of the Carse, though I entirely

forget what it was: I only know it was dictated more by the heart than the head.

Believe me, that the assurance of your friendship is truly gratifying to the affectionate heart of your sincere friend,

E. HAMILTON.

To H. M., Esq.

And I do assure you, my dear friend, *upon my honour*, that, of all the testimonies of approbation I have yet received, none has been so truly gratifying to my feelings as that your last letter conveyed. Applause is, in my estimation, a sort of paper currency, which I value in exact proportion to the degree of credit in which I hold the bank that utters it. Some I consider as French *assignats*—mere waste paper; others, as country bank notes, of doubtful value; and a few, a *very few*, like real *Abraham Newlands*, the same as sterling

gold. I feel with you that the value of approbation rises in proportion to its being discriminating; but in my own defence I must observe, that subjects addressed to the feelings, and to the understanding, admit but in a slight degree of the same species of criticism. The judgment of the poet is (if I may so express myself) exerted under cover of the imagination. It is employed to bring forward the simple and natural emotions of the heart. Its operations must be concealed, for, if they once appear, and the labour of the mind becomes visible, the illusion is broken, and the heart ceases to sympathise. Now, it appears to me, that even in your slighter pieces, this illusion is kept up; while, in your more finished productions, it is preserved in an uncommon degree. This, my feelings tell me; and to them, in this instance, judgment delegates her authority. Had I, previously to publication, known of your intention of paying a compliment to

Lord N., I should certainly have remonstrated. I confess I was revolted at the idea of your virtuous muse binding her laurels round the brows of one of the most profligate and worthless of the human race; but that single passage excepted, I found so much pleasure in the perusal of the whole, that I would not have taken a thousand pounds to have gone critically over every *if* and *and*, purposely to pick out some faults. I fear your Dr. —— is rather too much of an antic for me; but let him weigh as heavy as he will, I have enough to throw into the opposite scale, to keep the balance even. There is this very moment a most *apropos* billet from Miss H. (the friend of Gibbon) along with your volume, of which she had begged the perusal. She is (as I am) pleased with the whole; but with the *Harp*, and the *Waes o' War*, she is particularly charmed. There's for you! Don't, after this, be telling me that I am no critic!

In what you say with regard to the second volume of *Letters on Education* being, in some parts, too abstruse for certain readers, you are, by no means, singular; nor was the objection unforeseen or unexpected. It was well weighed before publication, and I am happy to say that every day gives me fresh reasons to be satisfied with the reasons that determined me. There was, in the first place, a settled conviction that far greater mischief is done by education conducted upon false principles, than by neglect. When people, capable of reasoning, and zealous to educate their children with uncommon care, pursue an erroneous system, the evil is, in general, irremediable. Of this I have had so many convincing proofs, even in the circle of my own acquaintance (in England), that, to be in any degree the means of leading such parents to more rational views, seemed to be a most desirable object. In Scotland, people, in a great

measure, (remember, I always make allowance for exceptions,) think and act *en masse.* There (in my time, at least,) few would have dared to venture upon experimental education. The dread of singularity is a consequence of the strength of those social ties which bind, not only the affections of the heart, but, in some measure, confine the understanding. In England, people stand in general more independent and alone. This individuality of character possesses both its advantages and disadvantages. Unfettered by the fear of giving offence to the prejudices of the narrow circle in which one moves, they must necessarily acquire a greater degree of energy; but if judgment is not strong, this energy may be ill directed. What I have observed in characteristic difference is chiefly applicable to those who have not had an opportunity of mixing in general society, and therefore will be found more strictly just with regard to my own sex than to yours. In Scotland, as far as

I have observed, judgment is the only faculty which it is deemed allowable for women to cultivate; but, happily for my countrywomen, judgment is the most important faculty of the human mind, and in its cultivation such a foundation is laid for the strength and vigour of the other powers, that a little further pains would bring them to perfection. Do I not well remember hiding *Kaims's Elements of Criticism*, under the cover of an easy chair, whenever I heard the approach of a footstep, well knowing the ridicule to which I should have been exposed, had I been detected in the act of looking into such a book? Now, as I have had occasion (even amongst some of my intimate friends) to observe the disadvantages attendant upon the limited cultivation of the mental faculties; as I have seen some sacrificing their happiness, and real respectability, to prejudices which would have vanished before the strength of reason; others involving

their families in misfortune, from which the capacity of taking more general and comprehensive views would have saved them. I could not have been satisfied, if, in a book on education, I had not, as far as my feeble powers would admit, endeavoured to enforce the necessity of cultivating the reasoning faculty, and to explain the advantages arising from the capability of taking general and extensive views. The subject I saw to be both delicate and difficult; but I believed it to be useful, and would not shrink from the task. I was, however, much disheartened on finding that all my male friends, on reading the three last letters, declared, that they believed them to be above the comprehension of all, except a learned female reader. Glad am I, however, to find that their apprehensions were groundless. All the ladies of my acquaintance here have read them with satisfaction; and I have received letters, even from young ladies, upon the subject, which

show not only that they understood it, but were capable of weighing, with accuracy, every argument adduced.

Does not this seem a confirmation of the proposition with which I set out, viz. that the cultivation of abstract reasoning is more frequent amongst persons of a certain class in England than in Scotland? though, whether this will balance the advantages which the bonnie Scottish lasses enjoy, I am far from determining. Greatly do you mistake me, in thinking that my pride is piqued by reflecting on the little notice that was taken of me in Scotland, or that I can be so silly as to make comparisons where circumstances are so widely different. No, my good friend, my mind is not so ill regulated; nor has vanity obtained such an ascendancy over judgment. In the narrow circle in which it was my lot to move, I am conscious that I obtained a greater degree of notice and respect than I had any

right to look for, considering that I stood in a manner alone — destitute of those ties of affinity and family connection, which are, in Scotland, the pillars of society. To obtain notice, however, neither was, nor, I trust, ever will be, my object. To be esteemed by those for whom I felt esteem — beloved by those for whom I felt affection, is the first and last wish of my heart; and that wish has never, in any part of my life, been ungratified. Next to the wish for esteem, is the desire of sympathy — sympathy in taste, in opinion, in sentiment. From this commerce of intellect, (if I may so call it) I felt myself excluded. It was my lot to meet with few who understood the traffic; and of those few, almost with none who would deign to exchange their precious ores for my unpolished pebbles. On coming to England, the scene was not only changed, but I found myself as if I had at once assumed a new character. Men of learning addressed themselves to me, as to

a being who was actually capable of thinking. Men of wit seemed to imagine that I could understand them; and both men and women, very superior both in point of situation and abilities, to those with whom I had been accustomed to associate, conversed with me so much upon a footing of equality, that sometimes I was inclined to exclaim with the *wee wife*, "Surely, *this is no me!*" Nor did this cease when we had the misfortune of losing *him* whose society was sufficiently attractive to account for our sharing in the honours that were so justly his due. In every place where my sister and I took up our residence, we found our society sought after, and our friendship solicited by some superior minds; and what renders those minds truly superior in my estimation is, that in their attentions to us, it was evidently *mind* only that they valued. Our introductions bespoke us gentlewomen, and women of character; and that was sufficient. We owed

all beyond formal civility to their own discernment. These good people, to whom I feel, I confess, a debt of gratitude, never had a notion of my writing a book.

Into what abominable tediousness of discussion this subject has led me! After all, you may, perhaps, still deem me partial. To show you, however, that if I am partial, my partiality leads to the northern side of the Tweed, I must hasten to inform you, that some days before I received your last, I had given a negative to one of the most tempting offers by which poor damsel ever was assailed — an offer of making the tour of France and Switzerland, with a party in every respect agreeable. I still wonder at my resolution in rejecting it; but the objections made by prudence, and seconded by affection, turned the scale in favour of self-denial. If I had accepted the offer of going with this party, my sister must have been left behind, and not only so, but have

been disappointed in the jaunt to Scotland, on which she had set her heart. She bids me tell you that she extends the olive branch to you upon condition that you remain in Edinburgh during our stay in that city; but if you disappoint her in this respect, and set off for Liverpool before our arrival, "war, eternal war she breathes."

Our plan is, to leave Bath about the 10th or 15th of April, and to proceed to Sir H. W—'s, in the county of Durham, where we shall probably spend two or three weeks, and then go on to Edinburgh, where our stay will be regulated by circumstances. We then propose making the tour of the Highlands, and returning by Glasgow;—thence to the lakes of Westmoreland, where we intend taking a cottage for a few months, and remaining till the beginning of winter calls us back to Bath. We should greatly like to extend our tour to Liverpool, and, if you can defer yours till July,

will promise to accompany you. Some ladies of your Edinburgh *coterie* seem well known to me, and what I know gives me an ardent desire to see them face to face. I shall meet Mrs. F. as an old acquaintance; pray tell her so, that we may lose no time in ceremony.

Adieu! you may see how much the *old woman* is growing upon me, by my *long clatters*. I have given you enough of *clish me clash*, and *clish me claver;* but, in plain sincerity, am,

Your obliged and affectionate Friend,

E. HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

Grassmere, near Ambleside,

May 29th, 1802.

A tour into North Wales, where we were agreeably detained far beyond our original intention, postponed to me the pleasure of receiving my honoured correspondent's

most obliging favour, which I found waiting my arrival at Dr. Currie's. Since that period, the company of friends, the hurry of travelling, and the fatigue of seeing sights, have not left me one leisure moment to express my thanks for your kindness, or my sense of the delicacy and politeness with which that kindness is expressed. Your goodness in addressing me as an old acquaintance enhances the obligation; and I think it due to sincerity to inform you, that when I last wrote, neither the name nor character of Dr. S— were unknown to me, and that the confidence which that character inspired, encouraged the frankness of my address.

I am, as you observe, happy in the acquaintance of many distinguished characters in the walks of literature and taste, besides being honoured by the correspondence of a few, who are personally unknown to me. To a mind possessed of so

much delicacy as yours, it will not, perhaps, appear surprising, that upon subjects of literature I should prefer applying to the latter, rather than the former. The character of an author I have always confined to my own closet; and no sooner step beyond its bounds, than the insuperable dread of being thought to move out of my proper sphere (a dread acquired, perhaps, from early association,) restrains me, not only from seeking opportunities of literary conversation, but frequently withholds me from taking all the advantage I might reap from those which offer.

You see, Sir, how willing I am to avail myself of the privilege you so kindly grant me, of speaking to you with the freedom of an old acquaintance; and by what I have said you will likewise perceive the magnitude of the benefit and pleasure you will confer, by favouring me with your opinion and advice.

The flattering reception my thoughts upon the subject of education has experienced from those whose approbation it is my highest ambition to deserve, encourages me to prosecute with renewed ardour, though in a somewhat different direction, the great design of my undertaking, which, as you doubtless have observed, was no other than to lead those who are strangers to the subjects of metaphysical enquiry, to a train of reflection upon the principles of the human mind, and to evince the practical advantage of this species of knowledge with regard to the formation of character. To illustrate the system I have laid down by a narration of fictitious events, (as has been done by Rousseau and many others,) seems to me futile and absurd. If truth is on my side, it will bear an appeal to more decisive testimony. Instead of the regions of fiction, I should wish to have recourse to the records of authentic history; and by the analyzation of some distinguished

characters, show the consequences of the regulation of the passions, and the operation of the various faculties. Having this subject in contemplation, I could not fail to be highly delighted with what is advanced in your admirable treatise upon the advantages resulting from the study of biography. While I perfectly agree with you, that these advantages would be more solid, were the examples drawn from a more familiar sphere, I must confess I do not conceive how this could be well accomplished. The springs which operate in private life, are too minute to be perceived by those who do not come in immediate contact with the individual. Of the many estimable persons who have never risen into eminence, numbers there doubtless are, whose lives deserve to be recorded. But alas! their record has perished with them. A few events may still live in the memory of their friends; the impression made by

their virtues or their singularities may remain; but the most interesting particulars would be searched for in vain. Induced by these considerations, to confine my biographical sketches to characters whose actions have necessarily been exposed to public view, I intend commencing with my own sex, and have thoughts (for as yet the plan is undigested) of giving the lives of the two Agrippinas, widow and daughter of Germanicus. It is no compliment to say, that your opinion upon this subject will have great weight with me; nor shall I, after the kind encouragement you gave me, offer any apology for requesting it.

If, upon a review of the period of history which is necessarily involved, you are of opinion that these lives may be made sufficiently interesting, I shall be much obliged to you for pointing out sources of information that may not have occurred to me.

It was the perusal of Tacitus, in Murphy's translation, which first excited the idea in my mind, nor am I at all acquainted with his cotemporary authors. Of Seneca's Letters, I am told there is an excellent French translation, which I have never seen; but if you thought it would be useful, should procure it. For to French, and my native tongue, I am, alas! confined.

Induced by the beauty of the situation, my sister and I have resolved on spending the summer in this secluded valley, where I shall hope for the honour of hearing from you soon; and wherever I am, shall never cease to be, with respect and esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged, and faithful Servant,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

Dear Sir,

How very ungrateful I must have appeared to you, from the length of time I have suffered to elapse without any acknowledgement of your last acceptable *favour*! But though my pen has been dilatory, my feelings have not been insensible, nor have the obligations I owe to you been forgotten. The kind encouragement given by your praise, has not failed to excite an ardent ambition of more truly deserving the meed of such highly valued approbation; and perhaps if I were deeply to probe my conscience, I should be obliged to confess, that the shame of telling you that the summer has passed in idleness, and that the months which have elapsed since I had the pleasure of hearing from you, have produced not even a well digested plan of my future work, has been the cause of my silence.

In the retirement and quiet of a cottage life, surrounded by those scenes of nature for which I have preserved the highest relish, I expected to have been able to accomplish much more than I ever could do in Bath or its vicinity. But when I thus thought, I did not take into the account the want of those accommodations, which custom has rendered essential to comfort, nor the disturbance occasioned by coming into immediate contact with a bustling family, nor the languor produced by the incessant rains of this most uncongenial climate. Some of these obstructions to application, operated indeed more forcibly at Grassmere than they have done since our removal to the banks of Windermere: but a succession of visitors has left little time for study, and all that I have hitherto been able to spare has been devoted to books. The neighbourhood of the Bishop of L— and his family, is not one of the least advantages of our present situation. The

command of his fine library is to me an inestimable privilege; and the society of his family, to which his own extraordinary conversational powers add considerable value, is a first rate acquisition. Conscious of my deficiency in classical knowledge, I have resolved to go through all the Roman historians of any celebrity, whose works have been translated; as however remote the subjects on which they treat may be from those to which I mean to confine myself, the ideas received from them are so intimately connected with it, that they cannot fail to be of use.

You will perceive by this, that though my plan remains in embryo, it has not been quite abandoned. Perhaps you will have a clearer view of it, when I tell you that it is an illustration of the principles of the human mind at which I aim, rather than my own sentiments on education. Where, indeed, these principles are understood, and

properly attended to, the necessity of adhering to them, as the chart by which to steer in the conduct of education, will be fully admitted.

A knowledge of the early education of individuals is not essential to the attainment of my object. A discovery of their predominant passions and faculties, is all that is absolutely requisite.

To cherish in young minds a habit of reflection, and to lead to a philosophical application of history and biography, is another end which I propose in my intended work. But how far I shall be able to succeed I know not, neither am I very sanguine concerning it; for alas! so very few young people read with any other view but that of amusement, that the hope of being useful must be confined within very narrow limits. I had almost relinquished the thoughts of the Agrippinas, when I was

favoured by a visit from Professor D— S—, to whom only (yourself excepted) I had ever mentioned my intention. He so strongly urged my proceeding with it, and seemed to think their characters so well adapted to my purpose, that I have been encouraged to resume the idea, and hope soon to be able to give you some account of my progress.

If my sister and I have it in our power to comply with the pressing solicitation of Mr. and Mrs. S—— to spend the winter months in Edinburgh, I shall derive from it the advantage of literary conversation, in a very chosen circle of society; and expect much improvement, even from the casual hints and observations of such a man as Mr. S——; though, as his diffidence and modesty are in proportion to his uncommon attainments, it is only in the small social party that his sentiments are freely given. I expect with impatience his life of Dr. R—,

which is now in the press, but feel much regret from his assuring me that it is the last work of the kind he means to publish.

I hope it will not be so with Dr. Currie; although I believe he has had a full experience of the inconvenience incident to works of this kind, where the character is well known, and very accurately estimated, according to the points of view in which it has been considered. The success of Dr. Currie's work has induced some needy booksellers to seek for and procure some letters of Burns, which place him in such a light as he had not before appeared in. I feel for the vexation which this must occasion to my excellent friend, as I make no doubt that many illiberal and malevolent persons will accuse him of having given a false colouring to his highly finished picture.

I cannot conclude without again thanking you for the kind offer of assistance; and though I cannot think of availing myself of it, so far as to give you the trouble of transcribing for me, I shall be infinitely obliged by your transmitting me such hints as may at any time occur to you, and likewise for pointing out such authors as may be useful.

My reading has not been, by any means, extensive; for the last ten years the weakness in my eyes has been a perpetually occurring hindrance to study; and that I knew any thing before that period, was only owing to my having been early accustomed to pursue every subject in a regular course.

Your directions upon this head are more admirable than any thing I ever met with. Had I seen them at 18, I should have been

much wiser than I am at present. Such as I am, believe me gratefully, and faithfully,

Your obliged, and obedient Servant,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

Bowness, near Kendal, Westmoreland,
14th September, 1802.

To Dr. S——.

No. 16. North Hanover St. Edinburgh,
Feb. 7th, 1803.

Amid the variety of agreeable engagements with which I have been almost perpetually occupied since my arrival here, time has slipped so imperceptibly away, that I can scarcely persuade myself three months have passed since I had the pleasure of receiving your last kind and obliging letter. Its contents were too gratifying to self-love to be easily obliterated: and it would be ungrateful not to own that the encouragement you so kindly give to the prosecution of my labours has been pro-

ductive of some effect. During my stay at B——, which we only left the 6th of December, I proceeded rapidly in the life of the first Agrippina; but conscious that the imagination when it has forcibly seized a subject is very apt to mislead the judgment, I determined to lay it aside during my residence here, in order to have it in my power coolly to decide upon the propriety of the plan I have adopted. Nor is it my own judgment alone in which I intend to confide; on Mr. S——'s I can rely with much greater confidence, and to him I have submitted the manuscript, which contains about two thirds of the first volume. If I perceive that his opinion is against it, I shall without scruple consign it to oblivion. If he so far approves as to give me encouragement to proceed, I shall as soon as we return to the country apply with all the diligence my health will permit: and hope to have the work completed be-

fore our return to Bath in the end of Autumn.

I have had the pleasure of seeing Mr. P——, who was introduced to me by Mr. S——: he desired me to present his best regards, and to assure you that you have ever retained a place in his affectionate remembrance.

It is perhaps impossible for me to divest myself of partiality in speaking of the society of Edinburgh; but it appears in many respects superior to what I have ever met with. Seldom indeed are so many people of eminent talents to be met with in one friendly circle. Few days have passed in which we have not seen some persons of distinguished abilities; and of the numerous parties to which we have been invited, have found none that could be termed flat, stale, or unprofitable. If you have not yet seen the Edinburgh Quarterly Review, I beg

leave to recommend it to your perusal, as a striking specimen of the abilities of a party of young gentlemen, who promise to do much credit to the literary character of Scotland. Two numbers are already published, in which the articles written by Messrs. T—— and B——, (two young advocates) are conspicuous. It is scarcely to be expected that the work will go on long, as though fame may be a more powerful, it is not, I am afraid, so uniform a stimulus as money.

I cannot conclude without again expressing my grateful thanks for your kind offer of assistance. Should the sentence pronounced on Agrippina by Mr. S—— be sufficiently favourable to induce me to proceed, I shall be happy to avail myself of your goodness; and in the mean time shall rejoice to know if there is any commission that I can execute for you or any friend in Edinburgh, where we propose re-

maining till the middle of next month. The many interruptions that have occurred since beginning this must apologise for its inaccuracies. With sentiments of sincerest respect and esteem, I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged and obedient Servant,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

30. North Hanover Street,
May 28th, 1803.

Dear Sir,

You will scarcely believe how much I felt myself indebted by the last obliging proof of your goodness, since you may naturally conclude that gratitude would not have been so tardy in its acknowledgements. I must, however, assure you, that I am not ungrateful, and that nothing could be more acceptable to me than the transla-

tion you so kindly took the trouble of making for me. I am only ashamed to think of the trouble it must have cost you, while thanks are all I can send you in return; for much I fear that, even with all the assistance you have given, it will be a length of time before my heroine is in proper dress to meet your eyes. The dissipation of an Edinburgh winter has proved very adverse to study; for though a votary of fashion would smile at my calling the life I have led dissipated, it has been more than sufficiently so for me. Now, however, the scene begins to change. Many families have left town; and among those that remain, the rage for visiting has ceased. Small and social parties have succeeded the large and formal; and as my friends kindly permit me to refuse seeing them in the mornings, it will be my own fault if I do not make better use of my time than I have hitherto done.

The interest you have so obligingly taken in my present pursuit, induces me to go on without apology to give you an account of all that has passed concerning it in conversation with my friend Mr. D. S—, to whom I submitted my half-finished manuscript, which he read over with critical and minute attention. He flatters me with the assurance, that it is written in a far more masterly manner than any of my former productions; and pronounces biography to be my *forte*. But with all this encomium, I think I perceive a fear that the period of history may be deemed too classical for a female pen. He likes the idea of my making it the commencement of a series of comparative biography, and wishes me to balance the ancient with a modern character.

The life of Locke he considers as a *desideratum*, and greatly wishes me to undertake it; assuring me, that there are a

sufficient number of letters and original MSS. in the possession of a noble friend of his, to render it highly interesting.

The skip from Agrippina to Locke made my head quite dizzy. My wits were set to work to fill the mighty chasm; and at length I built the bridge as follows. As a partner must be given to Agrippina of her own sex, and one who, like her, had experienced vicissitudes of fortune, I could think of no one better qualified than the Princess Palatine, daughter to James I.

The next life should be that of Seneca; which again brings the reader back to scenes and persons to which the life of Agrippina had familiarised him. The contrast between Locke and Seneca, if well managed, would be sufficiently striking.

But how am I to get all this accomplished? I, who have long held life by so

very feeble a thread, that every breeze has threatened to snap it asunder. I have indeed in the last year made a great accession of health and strength, but never can expect a constitution equal to any great exertion. I shall however go on with the two first lives; and if they please me may be tempted to proceed if I find myself at all equal to the task. I should here have a great advantage in the ready access to books; but as our house at Bath is now empty, we must think of returning to it as soon as the heats of summer begin to subside. Here there seems little danger of being molested in that way. The fields are indeed beautiful; and the view we have of them from our windows gives to our situation many of the *agrémens* of the country. But the air is still keen and piercing: though the easterly wind, which used to be considered as the most formidable enemy here, has for the last two or three years been very little known; a circumstance which Mr. P——

tells me confirms the opinion of some philosophers that east and west winds are only accidental, and that in truth they are equally at this season from the north. On a better acquaintance with Mr. P— — I find more and more reason to admire the very just description you gave of his character. The amiable simplicity of his manners and the acknowledged superiority of his talents, form an assemblage so respectable as to put conceit out of countenance: and I think it no bad trait of human nature (which it is so much the fashion to vilify) that such a man should be as much beloved by the young as esteemed by the old.

Men who have sufficient greatness of mind to dare to be moderate, are particularly useful in a place where many circumstances concur to give to the spirit of party a peculiar virulence. Of all the dreadful calamities of the last war, the increase of

this hated spirit was what I most keenly felt and most deeply lamented. I hope it will not in the same degree augment the miseries of the present. As public sentiment here is as yet left unfettered, the discussions I have heard upon the subject have been calm and rational.

As we shall probably not set out on our journey southward till towards the beginning of August, I flatter myself with the pleasure of hearing from you before I leave this; and request you will have the goodness to give me your opinion of the rough sketch of my plan.

I must not forget the request of Mr. P—— to present his affectionate remembrances, in which I am sure Mr. S—— would have united had he now been here: but he is in the country, and soon departs for England with Mrs. S——; where they intend passing the summer, which will

be a very great loss to me. I hope Mr. S——'s orders with regard to sending the books have been long ago executed.

Farewell, Sir, and believe me, with the most unfeigned respect,

Your very much obliged,
And obedient Servant,
ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

Leyton, Essex, Aug. 23d, 1804.

Dear Sir,

You are, I hope, by this time in possession of the best apology I can offer for my silence; though, as it comes in the shape of three volumes, you may perhaps think it more than sufficiently tedious. The lady, under whose care I had destined it to travel, is a relation, who has been for some time past in a very bad state of health, and having been advised to try the air of

the sea-coast, intended setting out for Bognor or Worthing the end of last week. In either case she was to go by Chichester, and promised that her maid should deliver Agrippina at your house. Lady H——, the mother of my friend, would not have been easily reconciled to the thoughts of her daughter's going, attended only by her maid, but for the assurances I gave her of being in the way of a physician on whose advice she might confidently rely: though, I must confess, I rather hoped that she might not have occasion to have recourse to it. Should any thing have prevented Miss H—— from going, Mr. Robinson will forward the books by the coach, as I am, indeed, extremely anxious to be favoured with your opinion of their contents; and as I am not nearly so partial to the work, now that it is finished, as I believe I was when it was half written, you may speak with freedom, without any fear of giving pain, or of disappointing sanguine

expectations of applause. In truth, I am so conscious of having done wrong in permitting it to go to the press, without having allowed myself sufficient time for revision, and without the advantage of correction from any other eye, that I am the reverse of sanguine as to its success. The last volume was quite oppressive to me. It was not, like the *Modern Philosophers*, written in pain, but in languor worse than pain; — a languor rendered still more intolerable by the irritation arising from perpetual interruption. Nothing can be more hostile to thought than the society of Bath. The very air is inimical to every thing serious; and the old game of "Neighbour, I'm come to torment you," occupies one half of its inhabitants from morning till night. Thus you see do I endeavour to transfer the blame of stupidity to the circumstances which I would fain believe occasioned it; and whenever you come to a good-for-nothing passage, beg you would

lay all the fault to the account of the Bath air. It would, however, have been, perhaps, more wise to have sought for some other apology, since the Bath air will no longer afford me any pretence for dulness.

After considerable hesitation and perplexity, arising from the impossibility of uniting different and distant objects, my sister and I have at length determined on again bending our course to the north. Though prudential and other motives have conspired to lead me from England, I cannot relinquish the idea of returning to it, and of still spending many pleasant days with the dear and numerous friends from whom I now part with infinite regret. If health permits, I expect to be back in two years, to spend the winter between my friends in Bath and London; and it is this hope which now chiefly supports my spirits.

I left Bath the day after *Agrippina* was completely finished, and am now on a visit

to an old and highly valued friend, with whom I propose staying four or five weeks. As I shall after leaving this be little stationary for a length of time, I hope I may have the pleasure of hearing from you while here; and remain, with sincere esteem, dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient Servant,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

Ambleside, Kendal, June 12th, 1808.

Dear Sir,

We can have no surer proof of the power of our servants, the senses, over the nobler part of our nature, than in the chasms that almost always take place in the correspondence of distant friends. It seems as if there was something in the very idea of distance, adverse to frequent and familiar intercourse: I would fain flatter myself that this is universally experienced, for on

no other principle can I account for having, since I received yours, written many letters to those for whom I have not half the value, and from whose correspondence I derive not half the pleasure I have ever done from that in which you have so kindly indulged me. The time that I have unaccountably suffered to elapse, has, I hope, brought with it no circumstance but such as proved medicinal to your health and spirits. You must be well aware, that in this every-day world, even the moral feelings may become too exquisite for our peace.

Perhaps this is never more likely to be the case than when one sets out with a very high opinion of human virtue, formed on abstract notions of what man is capable of attaining to, and confirmed by the testimony of conscience with regard to one's self, and of experience with regard to a few congenial minds. But alas! those who live in the world, and mark with observing

eye what passes there, must, if they would escape disgust, either retire again within their chosen circle, or lower the tone of their expectations, by making ample allowances for the operation of pride, vanity, and selfishness. On all party questions, there are undoubtedly prominent and ruling principles; but I am willing to believe that it is for this reason they are so, that in all party questions they govern without alarming the conscience, which of all our faculties is most effectually paralised by sympathy in a common cause. On this account I hold the spirit of party to be radically vicious: but should be sorry to think that all who are led into it are individually corrupt. I indeed solace myself with flattering hopes of the contrary, and assure myself I know many who would shrink with horror from the thoughts of being individually guilty of the same crimes, which, if committed on a wider scale, by the party they espouse, they would deem it right to justify

and applaud. This remark was verified in many of the abettors of the slave-trade; it is still verified with respect to the opposers of Catholic emancipation; and I fear it will be the same in regard to other questions of no less importance to the freedom and happiness of our fellow-creatures. O! that we could hope to see that happy day, when religious principle shall so widely operate, as to be the constant guide of all who acknowledge its authority, when all other influence over opinion shall be disregarded, and no man think he has a claim to the character of integrity, who gives his support to any cause that is not clearly founded in justice and benevolence. I have just finished the perusal of a publication which plainly shows what may be accomplished by the persevering exertions of a righteous zeal. I allude to Clarkson's *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, which I think one of the most interesting books I have ever read. One cannot help envying the feel-

ings of this good man in contemplating the effects of his labours; nor can we reflect on the extensive consequences they may produce, in rescuing millions of our fellow-creatures from a state of misery and degradation, and be at the same time insensible to the operation of an over-ruling providence, which almost in every instance raises up some individual mind as the instrument of most extensive good or evil to his creatures. That the son of a Corsican attorney should have prostrated the kingdoms of Europe at his feet, and while yet but in youth tyrannise over the greater part of the civilised world, is perhaps no more extraordinary than that an obscure and unconnected individual should, by his unwearied exertions, have ameliorated the present condition of thousands, and removed the grand obstacle to the future civilisation and improvement of a continent more populous than Europe. For though Clarkson could not of himself have effected

this, (any more than Buonaparte could have conquered without armies,) I think it evident, that without his exertions the abolition would have fallen to the ground. This surely ought to afford great encouragement to every friend of truth; as no one knows how far his single efforts may be productive of great and lasting good. The great fault indeed seems to lie, not so much in the want of exertion, as in the misapplication of it, people in general being more desirous to make others yield to their favourite opinions in points of small importance than to influence their minds in favour of justice and humanity. But I must hasten from these reflections; for, having once imperceptibly slid into an accustomed train of thought, I am in some danger of forgetting the narrow bounds of my single sheet of paper, which already draws towards a close. You will see in the newspapers, that I have not been quite idle all the winter; but were you to look

into the little work which is now advertised, I am afraid you would think I have been employing myself to very little purpose. Had I thought it worthy of your perusal, I should have sent a copy; but in fact it is intended for a very different order of readers, and was written solely with a view to shame my good country folks into a greater degree of nicety with regard to cleanliness, and to awaken their attention to the source of corruption in the lower orders. The interest I have taken in our Edinburgh society for promoting industry, and the schools connected with it, has introduced me to a more intimate knowledge of the state of manners and morals among the poor than I have had any opportunity of obtaining for many years. Both seem to have been going back in that time, and to have declined in proportion as the nation has advanced in wealth and luxury. It is also remarkable, that morals appear to have suffered more rapidly in Scotland, from

the progress of methodism, than has been observed in England; but this may be easily accounted for. I left Edinburgh about a fortnight ago, on a visit to the lady at whose house I now am; and have been much delighted with the sight of my old acquaintances, the lakes, rivers, and mountains, in this charming region, to say nothing of the inhabitants, though among these are many interesting and worthy friends; and these it is always a treat to meet with. I have promised my sister to set out on my return homewards in about a fortnight, and hope you will have the goodness to favour me with a letter shortly after; and that I shall have the pleasure of hearing from it, that Mrs. S—— and you are both as well as I wish, which implies all that this world can give. Adieu, dear Sir; with affectionate regards to Mrs. S——, believe me,

Your obliged and faithful

E. HAMILTON.

To Miss J. B——.

Wilton Lodge, near Hawick,
July 22. 1808.

My dearest Madam,

I have purposely denied myself the pleasure of answering your truly acceptable letter until now, that I conclude you to be fairly settled at home; as I well know, that on your first arrival there, after so long an absence, you must, for a while, have been so completely occupied by the scene around you, as to have but few moments to spare for your distant friends. They will now, I think, like the ghosts of Ossian, be visiting your day-dreams on the heath, and therefore I hasten to send such a memorial as may at least serve to secure me a place in the crowd. There is no telling you how much I begrudged Keswick these two days which it so ill repaid. Had you taken the other direction, and gone to Bowness, you should not have spent them

without company; and at Bowness, the very instant the rain ceases, the short heath upon the hill is dry enough for walking; and then, when a shower came on, it would only have afforded an opportunity of introducing you to some of my favourite cottagers, whose kind hearts, and simple manners, would have pleased you no less than any part of the scene. Ambleside is too much spoiled by the world; so much so, indeed, that it is little better than any any other country town. But a few miles from it, the people are yet uncorrupted; and though they have all a spirit of independence not elsewhere to be met with, they are hospitable and kind. I only had it in my power to spend a single day at Bowness during my stay with Mrs. G——, but it served to confirm my partiality for that region of the lakes, which, as a residence, I should greatly prefer to every other. I am indeed a great admirer of the scenery at Coniston, where I spent a week very

lately with Mrs. S——, and, along with her, visited some very beautiful places on the west side of Windermere, resting a day at Fellfoot, the seat of Mr. D——, where the lake terminates in a winding stream. On Sunday morning, before going to church, we went with Mrs. D—— to visit the schools she has established for the children of the poor, and found all the boys and girls assembled in great order, and admirably well prepared to answer the questions proposed to them by the patroness. The happy appearance of the children, the sweet retirement of the spot, and the rural simplicity of the little church to which we all proceeded, were altogether pleasing beyond description. I came back to Mrs. G—— so full of the whole, that I wish I may have stimulated her to employ part of her ample fortune in some such establishment. I did not wait to see the effects of my hint, spending only one day with her on my return from Coniston, and then

with no other companion but my maid, set out on my pilgrimage over Kirkstone, in one of the hottest days I ever experienced. I had formerly seen the romantic hills of Patterdale crowned with snow. The contrast was now as great as possible, but in every state they are objects of admiration; and the ride through Gobonnon Park more charming than any thing I have seen. And yet after all these famous beauties, I find the banks of the Teviot wonderfully pleasing. I indeed see it to every advantage, for I see it in the society of friends I dearly love: but though this doubtless gives a peculiar zest to every enjoyment, the Teviot winding through these wooded banks would of itself delight me. One of the few days I have been here we spent at Minto, which is situated about seven miles below, the road following the course of the stream.

I have run on with a long rig-ma-role of egotisms, without once referring to the con-

tents of your highly prized letter, for which I felt, and still feel, truly grateful. A thousand thanks for all the kind expressions it contains. I am sensible of your goodness in seeing me so often; but yet, with most unreasonable inconsistency, I perpetually regret that we met so seldom. O that Miss B—— and you were now here, where, without restraint or ceremony, we might chat at our ease, and play girls again. One week thus spent in the country is worth a century of town visits, an observation, which, since I came here, has been specially verified; for though the ladies of this family and we have visited ever since the elder sister was married to Mr. A——, who is our particular friend, and was the intimate friend of our brother, I till now scarcely knew them. On the banks of the Teviot I could speak to you on subjects which at this distance I dare not risk. Perhaps if you encourage me, I may hereafter hint to you the new notions

that have been rumbling through my brain in a chaotic state on the subject of the passions. My attention must still be longer given to the collection of facts, as the basis of my theory, before I bring it forward; and perhaps life may be too short for my purpose. But the nature of the affections are in the mean time learned from experience: with me they obey the impulse of esteem. Truly then, and sincerely, may I say to both the dear Miss B——'s, that I remain their affectionate, faithful servant,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

P. S. I return to Edinburgh in about three weeks.

To Miss J— B—.

53. George Street, Edinburgh,
Nov. 18th, 1808.

If my dear Miss B— has been accustomed to go on smoothly hand in hand

with Time, so nicely accommodating herself to the pace of the old gentleman as never to let him get a-head of her by a single step, she will hardly be able to make allowance for the unfortunate wights who, in order to keep up with him, are obliged, in the course of every day, to throw overboard some of the intentions of the morning. I have found myself exactly in this predicament, ever since my return to Edinburgh; and when this happens to be the case, I think correspondence with my absent friends is very apt, among all the packages of intended performances, to be the lot sacrificed. This honest confession contains the only apology I can offer for having been so long in acknowledging a letter which, in the glow of heart I felt on receiving it, was in imagination to be replied to in the return of another week.

I do not recollect any events which have occurred in the interim, that would, in the

recital, be anywise interesting to you. One only has been deeply so to us, and that a melancholy one: but I do not think you were acquainted with the family in which the event alluded to has taken place. If, indeed, you ever met C — R —, she could not have escaped your notice; for, though her beauty was not of the obtrusive kind, she was so very lovely, and so very engaging, that she never failed to attract attention. Her death (after only a fortnight's illness) has thrown a heavy damp on the spirits of all who were intimately acquainted with her; nor do I recollect an instance in which sympathy has been more generally felt than in the present, towards her mother and sisters. It is on such occasions that one sees human nature to the greatest advantage; and highly consolatory is it to the thinking mind to observe the evidently beneficial consequences that follow in the train of calamity: for, surely, whatever tends to awaken the generous and benevo-

lent sympathies, is improving to the heart. Unfortunately, we cannot well estimate the extent of the impression by the strength of the terms that are used in describing it; but did every one, in speaking of what they feel on subjects of this nature, make a point of expressing themselves with tolerable accuracy, neither saying more nor less than the truth, we need not wish for a better opportunity of peeping into the interior.

I am afraid the fruits of my observations on the passions are not yet sufficiently ripened to be worth communicating: but crude as they are, you shall have them; and I expect that you will freely tell me how far you think them worth cherishing to maturity.

To come to the point at once, I shall begin by stating that I not only consider pride as the origin of hatred, in its various

branches, as malice, envy, jealousy, revenge, &c., but consider all these passions to be nothing else than modifications of pride. That ambition proceeds from the same source will be more readily apparent. Ambition is, indeed, very evidently nothing else than pride directed to certain objects: but to prove that the other passions equally belong to it, may require greater powers of logic than I am mistress of, though I have the subject very clearly and satisfactorily arranged in my own mind. The greatest difficulty that presents itself is in finding terms to express my definition of pride: the best I can at present think of, is that of a resistless propensity to extend the idea of *self*. This propensity leads every man to create around himself a sort of circle, which, in imagination, he completely fills, and which he perpetually endeavours to enlarge, by carefully stuffing into it as many objects as he can possibly find means to appropriate. Pride having once adopted

as its own all that it has thus identified with self, is bound to defend the possessions thus acquired from being intruded on by the pride of his neighbour. When the two circles come near each other, Pride instantly assumes the form of Jealousy. When they come in contact, Pride sends Anger to the post of danger; and, if the enemy is so strong as to occasion fear, Malice mounts perpetual guard. As it is in the very nature of things that Pride must have his own circle uppermost, the least apprehension of its being otherwise brings him forth in the shape of Envy; and in this shape he is most apt to exhibit himself, when circumstances confine the bounds of his circle within narrow limits. In such circumstances the imaginary circle becomes quite invincible to others; so that it is often exposed to rude shocks, which never, however, fail to call up resentment, or malice, or revenge: as, witness a quarrel that has taken place, during the present hour,

between our cook and upper maid, about seasoning a pudding. Over the culinary province cook's pride reigned in glory, till it came in contact with the wide-extended circle of the other, which (formidable as it has often proved to me) did not get leave to approach Mrs. Cook's circle with impunity. As the one happens to be Scotch, the other English, I need not tell you the circle of each took in the whole extent of her own nation; as completely identifying it with the idea of self, as if they had been one and indivisible. All the families in which each had lived were likewise, for the moment, made a property of; and the grandeur of them set forth, by each party, as incontestible proof of her own superiority.

I have known instances in which pride has not been contented with extending itself in one direction: it appropriates as its own the future time, and swells by

feeding on the posthumous honours that shall attend the *manes* of the great, for ages yet to come. This, you will say, is rather vanity than pride; but, as far as my observations reach, the difference between the two passions is entirely occasioned by the strength or weakness of the mind on which they operate. Vanity does not, indeed, defend its pretensions by the same weapons; and for this good reason; because it has the happy art of persuading itself that its pretensions are on all hands allowed, and that its rights are indefeasible. When this persuasion is imperfect, vanity may be seen asserting its ideal rights by means of malice, envy, jealousy and the more cowardly of the vindictive passions.

I am very anxious to know what you think of the opinion thus vaguely explained; nor is it any compliment to say, that I would rather have your judgment on the subject than that of the profoundest

scholars in Christendom. Where is the scholar whose pride is not enlisted in defence of some set of opinions, with which opinions, or their authors, he has so far identified himself, that if they are touched, he feels it as if attacked in his own nerves? Happily for us, we are in this respect unfettered; or, if we put on fetters, they must be of our own forging. I wish to assert this freedom, and to lead others to assert it, by showing the share that pride has in all matters of controversy, and party strife. My views extend still further, and embrace objects of more importance: but I have not yet attained sufficient confidence in my own strength; and am sure I have sufficiently tired you for the present.

I hope I may congratulate you on the happy effects of your performance on the sopha covers; but really think you ought to have sent for a notary public, and had a regular entry made in some national register

at every patch. Who knows what fortune you might thus have secured to the future possessor! What would a stocking darned by the hands of Shakspeare now bring to the lucky owner? — and if the value of a thing be as much money as 'twill bring, how precious, a hundred years hence, will be all the articles on which you have bestowed your time and ingenuity! and yet, I dare say, not one word of this ever came into your simple head. See what a fine thing it is to have such a genius as mine to instruct you!

Winter has once more assembled the members of our little coterie, with whom we have already spent some social pleasant evenings — far pleasanter to me than the larger parties which take place in the more advanced season. My sister bids me assure both the dear Miss B—'s of her affectionate regard; and my cousins beg I would not forget to offer their compliments. So now that I have done my duty to them, I

must beg to add one word more from myself. It is only to entreat that you would write me soon, and that your sister and you would both believe that you are truly dear to

Your sincerely affectionate

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Miss J— B—.

George Street, Edinburgh, June 21st, 1809.

My dear Madam,

You will, doubtless, imagine that I mean to make my letters appear of some consequence in your eyes; and that, if I can give them no other value, I resolve that at least they shall be valued as rarities. Now, rare sights are holiday enjoyments. I have your *elder brother's* word for it, that "when they seldom come, they wished for come."

Instead, therefore, of making any apology for permitting your last kind letter to

remain so long unanswered, I shall proceed to tell you all that we have been doing since winter left us. He had used me so ill, that I rejoiced in his departure; but, alas! we had no reason to rejoice in Scotland, for he soon returned under another name, and has, with only the intervention of a few days, continued to reign over us till within the last week. You know in what perfection we have the easterly winds here; but never have they been more constant or severe than in this year. Few constitutions have been able to stand the test; and many of our friends have suffered severely. Thank God, none of their sufferings have ended fatally, and all in whom we are most interested are now in a way of doing well. In the month of April my sister and I changed the scene for a week, by paying a visit to some friends at Glasgow. I had not been there since the year 1785, and then but for a short time; so that all was to me new and strange.

Why should the alterations made by time have the power of making us melancholy? Were this sensation occasioned only by changes that are of a melancholy nature, the question would be ridiculous; but, fond as we are of change in prospect, we never fail to be affected by those which mark the lapse of time, even when the change is for the better. The Hunterian Museum, much as I was pleased with it, scarcely reconciled me to the break which it has made in the broad walk of the college garden; and the fine buildings which have encroached on our *promenade* in the green appeared as so many nuisances, which I could scarcely tolerate. Of all my college friends, Mr. and Mrs. J — were the sole survivors; and they, though changed in person, were unchanged in kindness: so that I had much of the pleasures of memory, together with its pains. Your amiable friend, Miss G —, had the goodness to call upon me, and most kindly invited me to

pay her a visit in the country, which I truly regretted it was not in my power to do; for there is about her a simplicity so prepossessing, that I should rejoice in having an opportunity of cultivating her acquaintance. I recollect perfectly what she was at Miss M —'s, and see the same unaffected manners, the same happy, cheerful temper which she had when a child: — another proof, to the many I have found, of the permanence of the original stamina of which the character is formed.

Edinburgh now begins to wear a very deserted aspect: but as some of our most intimate friends remain stationary, we do not feel ourselves deserted; and though half the houses seem to be shut up, Mrs. Siddons has not found any lack of audience. I have had a seat in the stage-box every evening that I have found myself well enough to attend; and, as I never had so good an opportunity of marking

every slight movement of her countenance, I never so thoroughly admired her. We need only hear her voice, and see her attitudes, to be convinced of her extraordinary powers; but without being near enough to observe the manner in which she contrives to render visible every passing emotion of the soul, we can never appreciate her merit. In all outrageous characters, the passions are so much caricatured, that they may, without difficulty, be represented by any one who has sufficient command of voice and muscle: but it is the nicer and more subtle traits that require the master-touch of genius. Since I have seen Mrs. Siddons in the characters of Alicia and Queen Katharine, I have thought of her much more highly than I ever did.

Since the date of my last letter I have, till within these few weeks, been very idle indeed, but lately have been hard at work upon the *Letters on Education*, great part

of which I have written over again, principally with a view to condensing the matter, in order to enable the bookseller to sell at a lower price. I have, however, made some alterations, which I hope will be considered as improvements; but the task has been tedious and troublesome, and will keep me in town for another month. I then propose going into Roxburghshire for some time; but hope I shall hear from you ere then, though sensible how little I deserve such an indulgence. My sister desires me to be sure not to forget her very best regards to both the dear Miss B—'s. Farewell, my dear and amiable friend: believe me

Ever affectionately yours,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Miss J—— B——.

Whitburn, August 29th, 1809.

No sooner do I take my pen into my fingers to write to you, my dear friend, than I am instantly transported into the dear little drawing-room where I spent so many happy hours; and setting myself down on the couch, with one sister by my side, and the other in the snug corner exactly opposite, I deliberately put my feet upon the fender for a social crack. Well; how have you been this age? and what have you been about since I left you? — "Living to make others happy, and to enjoy the happiness we communicate," ought to be the answer. And though neither of you would, perhaps, be so honest as to say so, exactly in these words, it is a truth which none who has spent a week with you would fail to acknowledge. I sometimes, after having spent some time amid all the materials for enjoyment, have, on reflection,

reproached myself for not having been sufficiently sensible of my happiness: but no reproach of this kind accompanies the recollection of the days I spent at H——; for I enjoyed them with my whole heart: nor do they return to me like those, the remembrance of which, though pleasant, are mournful to the soul; for they continue to delight me on reflection, and will long continue to delight me.

In the midst of all the hurry and bustle of packing, and talking to friends who had come to take leave of me, I received a kind note from you, inclosing the lace which I had so carelessly left behind; and fear I must have appeared very ungrateful to Mrs. B——, for only sending by her servant a verbal message, in return for her polite note which accompanied it: but I hope she will receive, through you, assurances of the sense I entertain of her kind attention; for she is one of those whose good

opinion I should be anxious to obtain and to preserve.

I thought I should be able to write all this from P———, knowing that I should there have time enough upon my hands. Time, indeed, I had in abundance, as we staid a whole week; and, from early breakfasts and late dinners, had mornings of an unconscionable length. But, unfortunately, I could make no use of them. The very day of my arrival there, I was seized with an inflammation in one of my eyes, which, though it terminated in what is called a *stye* (no dangerous complaint), effectually prevented me from using them; and saved Mr. S—— a world of trouble in the franking of letters. I was, however, well enough to enjoy the society of my friends; and found there some who were particularly agreeable. Mr. S—— is one of the most companionable men I know, and is to his daughters as a friend and brother. He read to us; laughed

with us; and, finally, helped the young folks to make out their country dance; and led off with Mrs. S—— in great style, their own children composing half the set.

From P——— we took Cambridge in our way to York, and were greatly pleased with having it in our power to see the far-famed* chapel of King's College, which fully answered our expectations. I hope you visited York on your way south; as, though you did not quite agree with me in admiration of the Salisbury Cathedral, I think you must feel as I do with respect to that of York. While I wandered through its lofty aisles, I forgot the sensations of hunger, vexation, and disappointment with which I entered it: but know not how long the charm would have continued to operate; for, happily, I had not leave to make the experiment to its full extent. In fact, when we went into the cathedral, we knew not where to go for a dinner. The friends I

had expected to find in York were absent. Every inn, every lodging was full: no place would admit us; nor could we get a horse to carry us on. I was just thinking whether it would not be advisable to steal a loaf, in order to get a lodging in the Castle; when, on issuing out of the chapter-house, I heard my name pronounced by a friendly voice; and, answering the glad summons, found my friend Mr. S——, who had heard of me at the post-office, and had come in search of me. Here ended our adventures. We accompanied him to H———, and spent that and the following day with him and Mrs. S——. On the 20th we arrived here; and as Lady W—— would not hear of our leaving her so soon as I had intended, we are still to remain a few days longer.

Sept. 8th. Edinburgh.

I have not till this moment been able to command time to finish my letter; and am

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sure you will heartily congratulate me on being once more in possession of the comforts of my *ain* fire-side. I had the happiness of finding my dear sister in perfect health, and enjoying the society of a highly valued friend, whom we have not seen for many years.

We had, indeed, a joyful meeting on all parts. I believe I mentioned my intention of taking down with me the younger sister of Miss C——, whom you saw with us. The two dear girls have been long separated; and the meeting between them was of course highly interesting. We are, in short, a very happy family. I wish you could take a peep of us. When will the happy time arrive when I shall have the pleasure of bidding my dear friends welcome to Edinburgh? I flatter myself that I shall one day or other enjoy this exquisite treat, and have it in my power to have you both by night and by day to myself.

* * * * * *

With best love to dear Miss B——, and cordial thanks to her and her witching sister, for all their goodness to me, and with kindest regards from my sister to both, I remain, provided she will never chill me with the appellation of *Madam*, my dearest J——'s truly affectionate

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Miss J—— B——.

George Street, Edinburgh, 1809.

A tedious fit of very capricious gout, alternately flitting from the head to the chest, has proved a sad enemy to all mental pursuits, and disqualified me for taking up my pen, though only to speak the language of the heart to my dear Miss J—— B——. How graciously is it ordered by Providence, that this language should be so simple and unambiguous, as never to be misunderstood; and that while the com-

munication of the ideas we form concerning the structure of our own minds is loaded with difficulty, on account of our want of words sufficiently expressive, no such difficulty occurs in communicating either our sentiments or feelings. Do not, however, imagine, that I am so faint-hearted as to be dismayed by a view of the obstacles which await me in the pursuit of my inquiry; though I am very sensible that these obstacles are the more formidable, from being confined within the narrow range of my native tongue. Had the many precious hours devoted to hammering at the pianoforte, to which I certainly had no calling, been given up to pursuits more agreeable to my own taste, I should now be reaping the advantage. But as it is now too late to think of making any addition to my vocabulary, until I learn the language of Paradise, I must content myself with what I have. I know not, indeed, whether in any of the dialects of this world I could

find a term exactly expressive of that propensity, to which I have given the denomination of Pride. Pride is, however, not strictly applicable (in all the senses in which it is taken) to my idea of this propensity: yet I know not what term could with advantage be substituted in its place. That the propensity to extend the idea of self, is a branch of the selfish principle is evident; but I fear that such a description of it would be vague and indeterminate. It has, besides, too much of a metaphysical air; and you know that the very word metaphysical operates on weak nerves exactly as the word *bugaboo* in an English, or *bogle* in a Scotch nursery. Now, happily, pride, and all its tendencies, may be discussed long enough, without any suspicion of its connection with metaphysics, or any physics; and, therefore, though it may occasion a little confusion, I believe pride must be the term employed.

And now this important point is settled, I proceed to tell you how much I am gratified by finding, that we agree so completely in our views of the subject in question; for it seems evident to me, that the only shade of difference between us, arises from a different use of the same words. What you call hatred, I call aversion; which is frequently a moral feeling: and where an immoral action, or immoral character, is the object, is very strictly so. It is true that the word hatred is often used as synonymous, as when we speak of the Deity *hating* sin, &c.; but in these cases it is evidently substituted for aversion, and is very distinct from the passion of hatred, which always springs from the selfish, and is utterly inconsistent with the benevolent. As for anger, I am afraid it claims a nearer connection with my self-enlarging principle than you seem to suspect. It is so impossible for us to separate, even for a moment, the idea of self from the objects with which

it has been identified, that it does not require any degree of reflection to make us feel the unworthy conduct of a friend, or countryman, with peculiar poignancy. When we read or hear of an action equally atrocious, performed in a remote age, or distant country, our indignation may be equally strong, but it never in such instances amounts to anger.

Your distinction between deliberate and hasty revenge, does not I think prove them to be of different families; for no attack upon *self* can be more direct than that made by the wasp: but when we are as eager to revenge an attack made upon the country which gave us birth, or the party to which we have attached ourselves, &c. &c. as we are to revenge the sting of the insect, it only shows how much all these things have been identified with the idea of self. Ambition is certainly of a more complicated nature than any of the passions I have now

mentioned. It, indeed, makes use of them all in the course of its career. But in its origin, I imagine that an ardent desire to extend the idea of self, by identifying it with objects apparently the most remote, may be distinctly discerned. It is only in very ardent temperaments that ambition shows itself without disguise; and only when empire is its object that we perceive the restlessness of its activity. But as ambition is not confined to heroes, we have now and then opportunities of examining it, in instances which come within our own sphere of observation; and in all such instances, that branch of pride, or rather that modification of it which I propose to illustrate, seems to me very apparent.

I am entirely of your opinion, with regard to the share which the consciousness of superior talents, and the pleasure of exercising them, has in exciting the ambitious to action: but the ambition which

rises no further than that of displaying skill in the game, will be of a very harmless nature; it will make a very good chess-player, but I am afraid will never make a hero,—that is to say, a pest to society. His delight in the deep play of war and desolation, must arise from excitements in which the selfish principle is most predominant. The stake for which he throws is the power of identifying with self millions of human beings, and of extending this idea over lands and seas. When the die is cast, and the stake is won, the excitement ceases; and, like other gamblers, he must renew it, or be miserable.

We must not be so sanguine as to expect to convert heroes into reasonable creatures; but I think that many young minds may be benefited by representing them in their proper colours. The object, however, that I have chiefly in view, is to lead conscientious, but unthinking minds, to reflect on

the nature and tendency of party spirit, in all its branches, civil and religious. It will, however, be some time before I can set about this task: for I have engaged to correct some of my former works for new editions, which will sufficiently occupy the few hours I have to spare in the mornings, at least during the spring months, when the town is full.

As I cannot find in my heart to wish you a sprained ankle, or the rainy weather which (to me) is almost as bad, I can only hope that the snow has been sufficiently deep at H——— to serve the good purpose of reminding you of the poor bantlings, whom you have so unnaturally deserted; and that you have ere now released them from confinement, and are nursing them with a mother's care.

I have just been looking over the fifth volume of poor Burns. It contains much

that he would have been sorry to imagine before the public eye; but his letter to Mr. Erskine, and some others, are invaluable. He never describes his feelings, without setting my heart in such a glow of indignation against those who made him feel the bitterness of dependence, that I cannot for a length of time recover any coolness.

I have written the greater part of this with my hand muffled up in flannel, so that I can scarcely hope you will find it possible to read thus far. My sister desires me to say all that is kind and affectionate to you and yours. I can no more.

Yours most truly,

E. HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

Edinburgh, 1809.

My dear Sir,

It appears a very long time since I had the pleasure of hearing from you; so long,

that I begin to think myself forgotten, or rather should begin thus to think, did I not from experience know, that friendship may dwell in the heart without finding its way to the pen. For once, however, I sit down to write without being obliged to make an apology for not having written sooner; a circumstance that so seldom happens, that it has in it all the charms of novelty.

In order to preserve to myself the credit of having written two letters for one, I believe I should not say a word of the real object of my letter till after its *conclusion*, and then slip it, as if by chance, into the P. S. But I am very bad at manœuvring; and shall therefore tell you, that I hope a friend, who took charge of a parcel to London, and has already been a month upon the road, will arrive there some time next week, and deposit the said parcel (which contains some specimens of our

Scotch gems, addressed to Mr. S——) at Johnson's and Co., St. Paul's Church Yard. I have written to Mr. M —— to put up with it a copy of the last edition of the *Letters on Education*, and of the *Exercises in Religious Knowledge*, which I left with him on purpose, but thought it best they should wait for the specimens. If you have any friend in town who will take the charge of forwarding the parcel to C ——, you will direct him to inquire for it as above; and I hope Mrs. S—— will have the goodness to admit the little specimens of the produce of our Scotfish shores into her collection, and dispose of the books as she pleases. I hope I may now ask your opinion of Mr. S——'s *Philosophical Essays*. You have doubtless seen them; and have, in part at least, I am sure, admired them. I do not however expect that you will give a full assent to all his propositions, or allow all his arguments to be conclusive. Let me try whether I cannot guess what parts

will meet your approbation, and what will not. I apprehend, then, that in the first part, the 1st 2d, 3d, and 4th essays, will be found to contain many passages to which you will not be easily reconciled. To the 4th, I imagine, you will particularly object; but I hope your objection will not extend to the 5th, for I confess I think it admirable. The second part I think you will like without exception; if you do not except to the essay on the sublime, which I find is not considered to be equally well written as the rest of the book. The concluding essay you will, I flatter myself, find, as I found it, altogether delightful: and I hope the second of the preliminary chapters will also meet your full approbation. Have you not been struck with the coincidence between Mr. S——'s observations and mine, in several instances? In one, the same thought is expressed in very nearly the same words; so that I shall be

obliged (to avoid the appearance of plagiarism) to alter several passages. I should be very proud of this, did I not know it to be the natural consequence of the mind's following the same track, though at an immeasurable distance.

I have now almost entirely re-written that part of my little work which you so kindly inspected; and I hope you will find that your judicious observations have not been lost. I am very anxious to obtain for the part that is to follow the same advantage; and hope, that when the town fills, I shall be able to get franks enough to convey it to you. I only fear, that as winter advances with hasty strides, it will be gone before I am prepared to avail myself of the opportunity. It however pleases me with the prospect of many agreeable additions to our society. Mrs. S—— will be assured that my affectionate regards ever attend

her. My sister begs that her's may be joined with those of, dear Sir,

Your obliged, and faithful servant,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

53. George Street, Edinburgh,
March 19th, 1810.

Want of ability to write precludes the necessity of further apology for my silence; else, dear Sir, believe me, your last acceptable letter should not have been thus long unanswered.

The prospect of being able to accomplish the plan, strongly recommended by my medical friends here, of hastening to the south, before the trying winds of our Scotch May begin to blow, helps not a little to keep up my spirits. My intention now is, to set off about the middle of April; and after stopping to pay visits to my friends

in Lancashire, Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire, to spend some weeks at Bath; and from thence to London, and so by York home. If I were alone I should propose to myself the pleasure of going round by C—, on leaving Bath: but as I am to be accompanied by a young lady, and should be distressed to inconvenience Mrs. S— and you by an additional guest, (though one to whom no sort of ceremony would be requisite,) I dare not take the hopes of this gratification into the account; nor indeed until I reach Bath, and find how my health stands the journey, could I enter on any arrangement that was not conditional. From the account I have given of my health, you will be prepared to hear, that all my literary labours have been at a stand. But though my pen has been idle, my thoughts have been often occupied by the subject on which I had intended to employ it; and by occasionally snatching a few

moments in the gleams of expected convalescence, I have been able to sketch the outline of the matter, as well as to arrange internally the whole of my plan: so that, if I live to complete it, the work will perhaps be benefited by the delay. If in those parts in which I have boldly dared to depart from all authority, and to give the result of my own observations and experience, independent of every system, I fail to impress my readers with a conviction of the truth and justice of my remarks, I shall doubtless expose myself to much censure. But trusting that my motives will be seen and approved by the good and wise, I shall pursue what I think the path of duty, without any apprehension of the consequences; though to have the sanction of such a mind as yours beforehand, would, I confess, tend to inspire me with additional courage.

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Pray assure Mrs. S— of my most affectionate remembrance, and accept the same from, dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

53. George-street, Edinburgh,
Sept. 20th, 1810.

My dear Sir,

When I tell you that I have not, till this very day, indulged myself with a perusal of your little volume, and the precious strictures on the MSS., you will be apt to think me the most ungrateful of human beings; but could you know with what feelings my heart at this moment beats, how differently would you pronounce!

Words can ill express how much, how deeply I feel myself indebted to you. You have, indeed, taken the most effectual

method to convince me of one of the most prominent errors of my system: for what but the innate benevolence of your own heart could lead you to bestow so much attention on my embryo work? But expect not that I am all at once to give up my favourite hypothesis: for is it not to the attention accidentally given to the *Letters on Education* that your kindness for the author originated? How much I have been indebted to that accident, I rejoice to think. It has led to consequences so extensive, as not only to augment the sum of happiness allotted to this mortal span, but to influence, by the light which it has been the means of communicating, the whole tenor of my thoughts.

Though I have read the pamphlet you were so good as send me, with much attention, I do not find myself qualified, on a first perusal, to enter minutely into its contents. The doctrine of materialism has ap-

peared convincing to so many persons, whose wisdom and virtue I hold in high estimation, that I am far from entertaining any prejudices against it: and if the arguments in favour of it have failed to produce conviction in my mind, it is because they seem to me, however plausible, to fall short of that degree of *proof* necessary to thorough conviction. I may say the same with regard to the opposite doctrine of spiritualism: but instead of fluctuating between the two opinions, I rest in a belief that the object of enquiry is placed beyond the reach of human intellect; and, consequently, that the disputes concerning it, like the disquisitions concerning a future state, previous to the light of the gospel, are founded on data which superior light may prove to be erroneous. It is therefore to those operations of the human mind that are obvious to human observation, that I have confined my enquiries; and, anxious to explain my notions concerning

them in terms that could, with least difficulty, be rendered intelligible to the unlearned, I have been at no pains to adopt, or to avoid, the peculiar phraseology of this or that particular school.

Hence arises many of those inaccuracies, which are in the glossary you have had the goodness to point out. Many of your explanations have afforded me complete satisfaction, and conviction; and it is highly probable that, on further consideration, they will do so universally: but as yet there are some few points in which I cannot thoroughly and entirely acquiesce; and I too well know the candid mind of my inestimable friend, to have any scruple in making the confession. The first, and perhaps the most essential of these points, regards the mode of expression which ought to be adopted. To the term "*state of mind*," I have two objections: First, that, by adopting it, I should seem to possess a

conviction concerning facts, which I do not, indeed, pretend to dispute, but which I believe to be beyond the power of human beings to investigate, and which, therefore, ultimately rest on no higher authority than conjecture: for it appears to me, that until proof can be given of the change that is said to take place, and until the nature of that change be demonstrated, the arguments for its taking place at all can never establish it as other than a probability. My other objection is still more forcible. It is founded on the popular use of the term in question; *state of mind* being very commonly spoken of as descriptive of the present feelings or emotions. By using the term in a different sense from that to which my readers have been long and constantly accustomed, I should certainly introduce great confusion into their poor brains. You will here observe, that the first of these objections to the term you propose, applies with equal force to those

which I have adopted; there being, in fact, no better grounds for believing that the mind possesses a variety of distinct powers, or energies, or modes of operation, than for believing that it is like one of the folded sheets of paper sold in the toy-shops, which, on being turned different ways, can in one moment be converted into a lady's muff, in the next into a grenadier's cap, a snuff-box, a pudding-dish, &c.

Of the faculties concerning which I have, I fear, spoken too decidedly, I am obliged to confess that I know no more than the child does of the growth of the moon; nor was it my intention, in speaking of them as if they had a distinct and separate existence, to give any grounds for thinking that I held such a doctrine. I only used the language which, from its being most familiar to the generality of my readers, would of course be most easily understood. Strictly speaking, the sun

cannot be said either to rise or set; but though this be known universally, it has made no alteration in our common modes of expression. I shall, however, make such use of the hints you have so kindly given, as carefully to avoid being misinterpreted.

Will you have patience with me yet a little longer? "Yes," your picture, which is now before me, seems to answer. Thus encouraged, I proceed to the only other point on which there is a single shade of difference in our views of mind, or rather of its operations. As far as your definition of attention is connected with and deduced from the system of materialism, it cannot, for reasons above stated, appear to me quite satisfactory. When you say, "It seems as if, by an act of the will, a person may turn his attention to what he pleases," the consciousness of what passes in my own mind, and my observation on the actions of others, concur with the remark: but as

I do not understand what is meant by a *difference in the state of mind,* in this first beginning of attention, and in its after stages, further than as it denotes a more or less intense degree of application, what follows appears to me obscure. That the mind of Archimedes, while intent upon studying a problem, was in a very different state from that of a person intent on the performance of an actor, is unquestionable; yet attention might, in both instances, be intense; it might be equally intense. Whence then, if a difference in the intensity produces a difference in the state of mind, proceeds the difference between the state of Archimedes and that of the spectator at the theatre? Is not the different natures of the objects of attention the obvious answer to the question?

Whether attention precedes perception, or follows it, I shall not take upon me to decide; but I think that, as far as we can depend on observation and consciousness,

we have from these sufficient evidence that some degree of attention is requisite to render us conscious of our perceptions. The great difficulty still lies in the choice of proper expressions; and, perhaps, the only way in which this difficulty can be surmounted is by explanatory notes. In forming these, the light which you have thrown upon the subject will be incalculably useful. You have, indeed, accomplished a seeming contradiction; for you have at once made me more diffident of myself, and more ardently bent on completing the task which I now perceive to be so full of difficulties. If I have even tolerable success, how great a share of the merit will be your's! Adieu, my dear and ever honoured friend! and believe me, with all the sentiments of gratitude, affection, and esteem,

Sincerely your's,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Dr. S——.

Aberdour, Fifeshire, Sept. 16th, 1811.

My dear Sir,

Having omitted to put up your last kind letter amongst the papers I brought with me to Aberdour, and not expecting to remain here for more than two or three weeks, I have delayed writing till I could have before me the epistle I intended to answer. But the beauties of this place, and the good effects produced upon my health by the sea-breezes, induced me so long to protract my stay, that I flatter myself you will be beginning to wonder at my silence; and therefore I presume to think that you will be pleased to accept of a little prattle, instead of a reply. I am sure you will be pleased to hear that having been induced, in spite of my resolutions to the contrary, to have recourse to the country air for the restoration of sleep and appetite, I have found the remedy effectual; and have, in

the six weeks already spent here, gained such an accession of health and strength, as I hope will serve for winter use, as well as present enjoyment. The beauties of the Frith of Forth must, I conclude, be still in your recollection: but if you never visited the coast of Fife, exactly opposite to Edinburgh, you can have no idea of its rich and varied scenery, adorned for above six miles by the woods and pleasure grounds of two different noblemen. The village of Aberdour, which belongs to the Earl of Morton, has little to boast beyond the charms of situation, for it contains not one tolerable house, except the parsonage: but the inhabitants, though not of the higher order, are all above poverty; and what is surprising, considering their vicinity to the capital, exhibit in their appearance and manners much of that sobriety and decorum which used formerly to characterise the Scottish peasantry, The large kirk is, on Sunday, filled to the utmost corner, by a

most respectable looking, and attentive congregation. It is highly pleasing to hear them speak of their good pastor; as the attachment they have to him must doubtless render the impression made by his admonitions proportionally more salutary, as well as more effectual: and indeed we have daily proofs of the influence obtained by a superior mind, over those by whom he is at the same time loved and venerated. By his interest with the great landed proprietors, he has effected the erection of an excellent school-house, and procured an excellent master for it. We accompanied him thither a few days ago, when the scholars were to be dismissed for harvest vacation. They were about 140 fine looking boys and girls, from four to fifteen years of age: all appeared to be kept under excellent discipline, and to be very well instructed. About twenty of the boys were in the Latin class; and the effect produced by the exertion thus given to their facul-

ties, was so perceptible in their superior intelligence, as to afford a convincing evidence of the advantages of classical education. At the conclusion, the minister gave them an exhortation as to their conduct during the vacation, to which they listened with great attention; and then each class, as they rose to depart, came round to us to make their bows and curtsies. The propriety and decorum, now so universally established here, is to me the more striking, from recollecting the rudeness and want of civilisation, that prevailed in this village about twenty-five years ago; so much is it in the power of an individual to effect. I came here accompanied only by my young friend, Miss C——, and hoped for the ability of doing a great deal in such perfect retirement: but the weather has been so fine, and the country so inviting, that I really have been made very idle; and since my sister and Miss H— have joined our party, have done little or nothing. Yet I

still hope to get my work brought into shape before mid-winter; though, as I do not task myself, and find it necessary to re-write almost all that has been already written, it is not improbable that it may not be put to the press for a year to come. Most willingly should I delay publishing, could I entertain a hope of procuring for the MSS. a safe conveyance to and from C—, as I am fully sensible of the benefit that would be derived to it from the visit: but, alas! I fear there is little chance for obtaining this object of my wishes. My sister begs to be kindly remembered. Adieu! dear Sir, and believe me, with grateful affection,

Ever yours,

E. HAMILTON.

To Miss J—— B——.

George Street, Oct. 8th, 1811.

At length, after many disappointments with regard to franks, I have an opportunity

of sending a little scribble chat to my dear Miss J—— B——, and am in such haste to avail myself of it, that I scarcely know where to begin. It is such a time since I have heard of you, that I am at a loss to conjecture in what happy corner of the kingdom you have spent the autumn; but as I delight to set my friends before my mind's eye, surrounded by the objects that are dear to my recollection from their connection with them, I will suppose you to be now at H——: though I have no desire to hear of your having been stationary there all the summer; as change of scene, and change of air, are, in my opinion, equally medicinal to mind and body.

Prudently resolving against indulging myself in any excursion this summer, I nobly resisted every temptation thrown in my way; and, panting after the country as I did, gave myself no little credit for resistance. At length, want of sleep, and

extreme languor, set prudence and economy at variance. But that their opposition might be as little formidable as possible, I made a sort of compromise between them; and crossing the water, fixed my quarters at Aberdour, a village exactly opposite to Edinburgh, embosomed in the fine woods belonging to Lord Morton, which conceal it from our view. My cousin E—— C—— accompanied me, and as she is no less fond of the country than myself, partook with me in the delight and surprise which the discovery of the unrivaled beauties with which the scenery abounded was calculated to excite. When you next visit Scotland, I must insist on taking you to Aberdour: and though it would require days to explore its beauties, I am confident that you would soon see enough to convince you, that an old gentleman, whom we sometimes meet in our walks, did not speak hyperbolically when he said, that after having travelled twice through Europe, he never saw any

thing to be compared to Aberdour, except in the bay of Naples. Is it not a libel on our national taste that it is never talked of? Alas! I fear that in taste, as well as in politics, men are like hounds, who only yelp after the leader of the pack. Would Walter Scott open the cry after Aberdour, as he has done about the Loch Katrine scenery, how should we be deafened by the reiterated praise. I had spent a month there before we were joined by my sister and Miss H——, who got sleeping apartments on the other side the street; for no house in Aberdour would have held us all. But you cannot think how we enjoyed ourselves; delighted not only with the place, but with the people, who retain much more of the simplicity of former times than in the manufacturing districts. The minister of the parish and his sister are so respected and beloved, as to possess an influence over the minds of all ranks; and that influence is so employed as to produce the

most beneficial consequences, especially on the manners and morals of the lower orders. It is about three weeks since we, with great regret, took leave of Aberdour: and soon after our return, my sister and I went to W———, where we spent a week very pleasantly, notwithstanding the unpropitious weather. But though the hills were bleak, and the skies were gloomy, all within doors wore such a smiling and cheerful aspect, as to make us forget the storm. It is, however, a lamentable season for poor Scotland; and, I greatly fear, will be severely felt in the price of all the necessaries of life. The rain has, as usual, brought back the gout, and rendered me very useless. I am not, however, entirely idle; but as my work is already very like the knife we used to be told of, which, after it had had three new hafts, and four new blades, was still kept for the sake of the giver, I cannot even guess when it is to be finished.

As you are acquainted with Mr. R——, I hope you will also become acquainted with his very sweet and interesting bride. She has had the advantage of being brought up by the best of women, and does credit to her tuition. You will, I am assured, find her truly amiable. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me

Ever affectionately yours,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Dr. H——.

Dec. 12th, 1811.

My dear friend's truly welcome, and long-looked-for letter, should have been sooner answered, had my ability equalled my inclination. But I have, for the last six weeks, been tired by difficulty of breathing, and (especially in the mornings) incessant cough, which, of all other complaints, most effectually deprives me of the power of thinking. It is to me what thrashing was to poor Burns—puts all my ideas to flight,

and absolutely annihilates every faculty. I can remain mistress of my thoughts in pain; but cough, cough, cough, is a tyrant that subdues me quite. But as I have now got a little respite, I ought to make a better use of it, than to throw away time in speaking on such a subject. Let me in the first place congratulate you on the appearance of the important volume, of which Sir G. M— has politely presented me with a superb copy. It is a precious gift in my eyes, deriving value from many associations that can never cease to interest. But I have endeavoured as much as possible to set these aside, and to peruse it as one indifferent to the success of the work, and the honour of its author; and am happy to say, that even seen in this light, it appears truly interesting, and, as a book of travels, is unrivalled by any modern publication.

Alas! poor E——, it has lost you for ever! With deep regret do I pronounce

the sentence; but I must confess that your father's arguments are cogent and unanswerable. But I cannot reconcile myself to your running the risk of spending the best of your days in a French prison; a risk, which in visiting the shores of the Mediterranean, must inevitably be incurred. To fall into the power of Bonaparte would, in my apprehension, be almost as bad as to fall into one of the chasms in the Snorfell Jokel. But should the evil unfortunately overtake you, I make no doubt that your tour would prove as serviceable to you as the *snow-bridge;* and by the celebrity thus given to your name, be the means of helping you over the difficulty. You ought, however, to be bound to good behaviour, before you obtained permission again to go a wandering in the Cyclop's dens: lest, in your ardour for peeping into the craters of volcanoes, you should forget that you have bones to break, or a life to lose; or, in your fervent desire of visiting regions that

once gave birth to heroes, muses, and graces, you should, by unadvisedly encountering pestilence and famine, produce misery to certain good folks in Old England, who are worth all the heroes of antiquity. Could I indeed be assured of your safe return, I should wish you, will all my heart, to find an eligible opportunity of gratifying so very laudable a curiosity. And as, if Mr. L— really goes to Constantinople, you are certain of finding in him a friend who would zealously promote your views, and assure you of protection, I almost hope that you may succeed in forming a party to the Archipelago; in which case you will certainly be prompted to proceed up the Thracian Bosphorus. Clarke's description of its entrance from the Black Sea has so strongly excited my imagination, that if I had read it thirty years ago, I should have been tempted to deplore my hard fate in being, as a *sans culotte*, debarred all hopes of ever visiting it.

You will, I make no doubt, find London much more agreeable than you expect. Not indeed, perhaps, at first sight; for there are few who can at once be reconciled to the new views of life which it exhibits: but as soon as one can enter into the spirit of the place, that is to say, can look on all the human beings around as so many puppets exhibiting for one's amusement, the scene becomes truly amusing. By degrees, those who have hearts are attracted to each other by sympathy, especially when similarity of tastes and pursuits have produced some sort of intimacy. But in London there are many who constantly live in crowds, without ever having experienced a feeling beyond that of general good-will for any human being. If, however, they seem in this respect deficient in the social virtues, the loss is compensated by their freedom from those petty personal animosities, which are for ever occurring to poison the sweets of social intercourse. Of ran-

cour, malice, and detraction, there is *quant. suff.*; but they are vented against the supposed principles or opinions of numbers, and, consequently, degrade not the character, as when wreaked on one's immediate neighbours. And as selfishness has in great societies a more enlarged, and, if I may use the expression, a more generous operation, than in small and confined circles, I can never agree with those who consider the society of the capital as particularly dangerous to virtue. To persons who have the power of selection, a great capital affords opportunities of mental improvement that are of incalculable advantage; for, with regard to the effects of society upon the mind, your observation is but too just. Like the evil spirits in Pandæmonium, we shrink into the dimensions of the place we are appointed to occupy, or that we seem in the opinions of others to occupy, — never expanding to our proper stature, but as we are excited by sympathy

with our compeers. If the mind be thus cramped in early life (as is generally the fate of my sex), it is a thousand to one that it remains stationary for ever, — never making an attempt to rise above the level of its immediate associates: and even where it has been enabled to expand, it is so much easier to sink to the level of others, than to raise the minds of others to a level with our own, that few in such circumstances do not sink. It is only by the love of reading that the evils resulting from associating with *little* minds can be counteracted. A lively imagination creates a sympathy with favourite authors, which gives to their sentiments the same power over the mind, as that possessed by an intimate and ever-present friend: and hence a taste for reading becomes to females of still greater importance than it is of to men, or at least to men who have it in their power to choose their associates. As for squires, fox-hunters, and worthy coun-

try-gentlemen of all descriptions, they are exactly in the same predicament as women — tied down to the society of little minds; and where they have no support from the love of knowlege, must sink to nothing. I suppose you have already found occasion to observe proofs of this. But, pray, are you not amused by the self-importance of these *great little* personages? Is it not curious to observe what consequence they suppose themselves to have in your eyes, for no other reason than because they have consequence in their own? And then, how delightfully edifying is their table-talk! Never wandering one inch from the petty concerns of self; and though every word advanced is on the respectable authority of the huntsman, gamekeeper, groom, jockey, cook, gardener, ploughman, butcher, or grazier, as proud of being the channel of such communication, as if derived from sources to which they alone could soar. Well! thank your

stars that you were not born to a great estate, to be the companion of grooms and jockeys.

I shall long to hear how you like London; and that I may have a chance of hearing of you frequently, you must permit me to introduce you to some of my friends.

This will be a lonely winter to me.; for I find such an increased susceptibility with regard to cold, that I believe I shall make a resolution to decline all invitations, and confine myself strictly to the house till spring. This I should like well enough, could I enjoy society at home: but a strange irritation in the wind-pipe is so immediately produced by speaking, that I cannot utter two sentences without losing my voice, and after having had a friend to tea, never get a wink of sleep. The pain in my side would make me hinkt my lungs affected, were it not that I have had it

before: but time does not mend these matters. I have, however, serious thoughts of flying from the severity of this keen climate, and shall try if it be possible to get into a warmer region, at least for one winter. But whether I shall be able to effect this change (as we must move *en masse*) is yet extremely doubtful: it, however, serves to amuse me in the mean time.

We are quite charmed with your friend Miss A——: she is a delightful companion; and the more that her mind and sentiments are developed in conversation, one sees the more to admire and to love. I leave it to her to give you all the news of Edinburgh. The Bishop of M—— and his family have got a house on the opposite side of the street; but though so near, we have not been able to avail ourselves of Miss E——'s introduction, farther than an exchange of messages and notes.

I hope I have not tired you quite as much as I have tired myself. But I must hasten to give the concluding paragraph, which, were it to contain all the kind remembrances with which I am charged, would exceed my powers of scribbling: so pray be assured in few words, that we all esteem and love you, but that you have a maternal interest in the heart of

Your faithful and affectionate friend,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Miss J— B—.

5. Princes Buildings, Clifton,
March 4th, 1813.

I have been so long over head and ears in debt to all my correspondents, that I may well be deemed an epistolary bankrupt; and can only humbly sue to be admitted to the benefit of an act of grace. To dear Miss J— B—, as one of my first creditors, I in the first instance apply; and

trust she will set an example of lenity and forgiveness. To prove that I am not altogether undeserving of it, she will receive an account of the way in which my time has been spent, in *two volumes*, which I hope will, some time in the present month, be ready for delivery. They have, indeed, occupied an unreasonable portion of my scanty capital, diminished, as it has been, by the inroads of sickness, and the taxes due to society. But the interest I have taken in the subject rendered me extremely anxious to do all the justice to it in my power; and finding this quite incompatible with letter-writing, I resolved entirely to give up the latter, until my work was fairly off my hands; and this day I expect to receive from Edinburgh the last proof-sheet. I shall be anxious to know how far it meets your's and your sister's approbation. Of the greater part, I flatter myself you will both approve; but I am not so certain with regard to some particular

views, in which I expect few to acquiesce that have already formed a different theory. At all events, I expect that you will, with your accustomed candour, tell me where we agree, and where we differ.

I must now look back for a length of time to the date of my last letter, when I was but beginning to recover from a long and depressing illness. I did, however, recover so rapidly, and so completely, that I had no longer any apology for seeking a warmer climate; but having made up our minds, we kept to our plan, and letting our house for a year to a lady from Bath, we set out the 24th September, literally on a *tour of visits*. Beginning at Sir J. H—'s at D—; thence to friends in Northumberland; thence to York, where we spent some days delightfully, partly with Mr. and Mrs. S. S—, partly with good Mrs. C— and her friends; and at every party having the pleasure of meeting Mrs. M—, who

kindly walked in from F— to be with us all the day. From York we went to Tadcaster, to visit our friends Mr. and Mrs. F—, then staying with an uncle and aunt of Mrs. F—, (Mr. D— and his sister,) whose house is the very seat of hospitality and kindness. I need not tell you how pleasantly our time was spent with our dear Mrs. F—, and her excellent friends, nor with what reluctance we parted. But the season was fast advancing; and the rains had already rendered the heavy roads through Yorkshire so bad as to occasion great delay, and great expence, sometimes obliging us to take four horses. The country we passed was, however, so beautiful, that, were I rich enough not to mind expence, I should certainly prefer that route to every other. Our road lay by Wakefield, Sheffield, &c. to Derby; then by Lichfield to Kenilworth, in Warwickshire, where we pitched our tents for more than seven weeks. This tent was a pretty cottage,

which our friends had procured for our accommodation, and which was neat and comfortable beyond description. I hope you have seen Kenilworth, as if you have not, you can have no notion of the beauties of our prospect. To this was added the greater charm of very agreeable society. To the esteem and veneration in which our friend Mr. C— is held by all his neighbours, we were doubtless indebted for much of their attention; but I certainly never experienced greater hospitality than during our stay in Warwickshire. We did not leave it till warned by frost and snow: and on our way to Bath, paid a visit to another excellent family, Mr. and Mrs. S—, of E— G—; where we found a favourite friend, Miss S. B—, of whom I dare say you have heard me speak. To tell you all we met at Bath, would fill a little volume. I shall therefore only say, that we were constantly and agreeably engaged; either in the company of old and valued friends, or

in a circle of society where we found much to gratify the taste, and always something to charm the imagination, or interest the affections. I found only two drawbacks on my pleasure; in being very stupid with regard to recollecting faces, and, unfortunately a little deaf. Of the first, I must give you a provoking instance. One evening, on entering the room at Lady S—'s, I was attracted by a comely pleasing countenance, which I instantly recollected to have seen before. The lady no sooner caught my eye, than she bowed as to an acquaintance; but still I was at a loss. At length she moved towards me, and after the usual enquiries after health, told me, that her daughter had that day received a letter from my friend Miss B—. O thinks I, now I know who you are, fair lady! and you can't think how happy I was at getting rid of the embarrassment of ignorance. So, in the full assurance that she was Mrs. H—, a lady I had seen at E— G—, and had called

on us a few days before when we were not at home, I entered with spirit into conversation; and first expressing my regret at missing the pleasure of seeing her, I asked, whether Miss B— had spoken of coming to Bath, as she and Mrs. S— had half promised to do. She said she heard nothing of such intention. I then spoke of Mr. and Mrs. S—, and of their happiness in Miss B—'s society. "What Mr. S—?" "Your friends at E— G—!" said I, in astonishment. "E— G—!" repeated the lady; "I never heard of them." How silly I felt and looked, I leave you to judge. But you have perhaps heard of the figure I made, from Mrs. H—, who must certainly think me a strange ninny. But this does not vex me so much as having lost the opportunity of hearing much of you from a friend and neighbour. Soon after this occurrence I caught cold; and, afraid of the usual effect upon my chest, we proceeded to Clifton, where I have been a prisoner

ever since my arrival: but though I have never crossed the door, have experienced the benefit of its pure air, as to it I ascribe a speedier recovery than usual, from an attack of gout upon my lungs. I wish I had any inducement to offer, strong enough to tempt you to forego the pleasures of home for a season, in order to gratify my longing desire to see you both. If we had a spare bed, I should express that desire without reserve. But as the season advances, the inconvenience of sleeping at a little distance will become less formidable; and the idea of conferring happiness by your society, will smooth the path. Pray then, dear friends, take it into consideration. We propose remaining here till the end of April.

Yours, most truly,

E. HAMILTON.

To Miss J— B—.

Princes Buildings, Clifton,
April 13th, 1813.

Alas! alas! how necessary must it be to remind us that this world is not the place to expect complete enjoyment, since it is a lesson so frequently repeated, that we cannot forget it if we would! Could I have contrived, in this jaunt to England, to have proceeded so far as London, and to have remained there, or in its neighbourhood, long enough to see all my dear friends in that quarter, I should have been too happy.

To leave England without seeing them, is, indeed, a drop of bitter in the bottom of the cup; but, bitter as it is, it must be swallowed; and, perhaps, when it is fairly down, a drop of hope may still remain behind to comfort me, by the possibility that

this may not be the last visit I shall ever pay to England. Imagination had bewitched me into a sort of confidence in the realisation of one of her pleasing visions, which represented my dear Miss B—, and my friends Mrs. and Miss G—, joining our party at Clifton, and spending part of the winter with us, in the enjoyment of the quiet and sober pleasures of domestic society, books, and conversation. But the dream is passed away, and I ought to awake from my slumbers to thank you for the kind wish you so cordially express for seeing us at H—.

I deeply regret to say, that I can only thank you; but the engagements we have come under to our friends in Ireland (were there no other obstacles) render it impossible to advance a step nearer London than we are at present. On leaving this, we mean to cross the Severn, to take a peep at Tintern Abbey, on our way to Mon-

mouth; whence we proceed by Holyhead to Dublin, where, however, we shall probably not arrive till June, as we intend to loiter in North Wales until the approach of summer. For a finer, or a brighter, or a warmer summer than that we now enjoy, there is, indeed, no need to wish: but I have lived too long not to have learned from experience, that when summer comes before its time, it only comes to laugh at us for putting faith in its fair promises, and then leaves to winter to "strut his hour upon the stage." I am therefore prepared for a change, though I do not, on that account, the less enjoy the delights of the present moment; and to one fond of the country, as I am, there are few enjoyments greater than that afforded by such sweet scenery as I have now an opportunity of exploring. We have rather declined making any new acquaintances; but of the few that we have been unavoidably introduced to, we think so highly, that we shall always

deem it fortunate to have known them. One lady I must introduce to you by name, that if you should ever hereafter have an opportunity of meeting her, you may know how to prize it. She is a Miss M—, and is, I think, upon the whole, one of the first of women, combining, in beautiful union, qualities that but rarely meet. Her fine talents are devoted to benevolent purposes; but her zeal is so tempered by judgment, that her plans for the good of her fellow-creatures, though extensive, are always practicable, and carried into effect by calm perseverance. She is not more than thirty, possessed of an ample fortune; her person is pleasing, her manners elegant, and her conversation delightful: but with all this, as she has no pretensions, she might pass in a crowd unnoticed. I shall be sorry to leave Clifton, for her sake; and through her have met with a few others, evidently worth cultivating, and sufficient to impress one with a favourable opinion of

the society to be met with in a certain circle; and to disprove the assertion I had heard made, that there were here only two sets — the frivolous and the enthusiastic.

If you have heard Miss Smith read at the oratorios, pray tell me what you think of her performance. I am interested in her success, believing her to be a very deserving woman.

You will, I trust, have the goodness to write to me before I leave this; as I shall not be again stationary for a great while, and know not where I shall be at any given time.

I go to spend Easter at Bath, but shall only stay a few days, as I expect Mrs. B— here, and hope to enjoy her society for a day or two, without interruption.

My sister desires me to say many kind things for her to you and yours. Nothing could have made her happier than to have had the pleasure of seeing you both. Have the goodness to present my best respects to Dr. and Mrs. B—, and your sweet niece, who, I hope, is well and lively as ever. — Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me

Cordially yours,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Miss L—.

Dublin, July 5th, 1813.

My dearest Friend,

Would you believe that we have been a whole fortnight in Dublin without enjoying one leisure moment? This is, however, literally the case. Had it not been so, you should, ere now, have had a long letter, for which, however, you would not have been much obliged to me, as nothing could have

been more gratifying than to have had it in my power to tell you all we have been seeing and doing in this new world.

Before entering on this, I must revert to your last kind letter, which I received at Hagley.

* * * * * * *

On the 17th of June we bid a reluctant farewell to Hagley and the sweets of retirement. Our journey was delightfully pleasant; the weather favourable to a wish, and the scenes through which we passed, in some places beautiful; but as we approached the boundaries of Wales, sublime beyond description. We were prevailed upon by the ladies of L—, to spend the day of our arrival, and the whole of the following, with them in their enchanted castle, of which E— has preserved a record for your amusement. We then proceeded to Capel Cerig, considered the most romantic spot in Wales; a little valley, sur-

rounded on all sides by mountains of various forms, with its pretty river and fine waterfalls. The scenery on the following morning was indeed sublime, much in the stile of Glenco, and continued to exhibit a horrid grandeur till we crossed the mountains, when it suddenly changed to smiling cultivation, the sea forming a fine outline in the distance. Being ferried over to the Isle of Anglesea in ten minutes, we proceeded to the extreme point, reminded often of Scotland by the scenery and mountains in the back ground; but the Isle itself is a flat, and now presents no wooded scenery to remind one of those solemn groves of oaks so celebrated in the annals of druidism. We visited many Welsh cottages, and were every where received with smiles of welcome; — found among them only one woman who could speak English, and from her learned much of their rural economy and domestic habits, which evinced a simple and uncorrupted

state of manners. We saw no appearance of sloth; their dress was neat, their poor cottages were clean, and all the young people of both sexes were in general remarkably handsome. I never saw so many fine complexions as at a sheep-shearing gala in the mountains.

But I must hasten to cross the water, which, though only a voyage of 65 miles, we considered as the most formidable part of our journey. It was, indeed, rendered less formidable by the kindness of Lord F——, who overtook us at Capel Cerig, and, going on before us, prepared for our reception and accommodation at every stage. Expecting our arrival at Holyhead on Monday afternoon, he waited dinner for us till after seven o'clock; and having, with the Bishop of K——, procured a packet to sail out of the usual time on Tuesday morning, had secured a place for our carriage, a cabin, and even sea-stores

for four besides his own party, as we saw by the book. Judge of our mortification to find that he had sailed an hour before our arrival. We did not get off till twelve at night (Tuesday), and it was four on Thursday morning before we entered Dublin Bay, which we should term in Scotland the *firth* of the *Liffy*. Its entrance is guarded on each side by conical rocks, (neither of them so high as Arthur's seat); the bay then expands to the appearance of a fine lake of about four miles wide, each side exhibiting a scene of richest cultivation, studded with gentlemen's seats, villages, and hamlets. A range of hills similar to our Pentlands, rises at the distance of a few miles, bounding the prospect on one side; while the Wicklow mountains, assuming a variety of forms, are seen in the back ground of the enchanting picture. As we could not get immediately on shore, and met with other delays, we did not reach Dublin till after ten, when we drove

to the lodgings prepared for us by our good friend Mrs. W——, in her neighbourhood. I cannot better describe her kindness, than by saying that she is to us a second Miss L——, anticipating all our wants, and all our wishes, and every day loading us with fresh obligations, in which there is so much heart, that there is pleasure in being obliged beyond our power to acknowledge or repay. Her dear amiable girls are equally attentive and obliging, and only grudge every hour that we spend out of their society. We lived with them the first three days, in which time we received a multitude of visits, and invitations extending far beyond our power to accept during the period of our stay. Our first appearance in public, if I may so term it, was a very flattering one. It was a grand college breakfast, given us by the Dean of Cork, in his apartments in the college. The party was select, though very large. Besides a number of ladies, we had the most

eminent of the Dublin literati, senior and junior fellows of the college, &c. &c. I was much gratified by going through all the halls and public buildings of the college, and especially by the library, which, even after seeing Oxford and Cambridge, strikes with admiration. It was an examination day before breaking up, so that we saw all the students assembled in one of the courts, and then, at the sound of the bell, proceed into the great hall, with beating hearts, few being able to conceal their agitation. It was a truly interesting spectacle. From that day till the present, we have been engaged morning, noon, and night, till I am really quite knocked up. At this you will not wonder, when I tell you that our day has generally begun by going to some gala breakfast in the country; then driving about to see some of the fine views with which the vicinity of Dublin abounds; then returning visits through the town; then dress, and out again to dinner between

six and seven o'clock: every where meeting with the best and most agreeable society, splendid entertainments, and that cordiality of reception which gives a zest to all. In short, we are in a fair way to be completely spoiled. As some proof, however, that we preserve our senses, I must tell you that we do not estimate the pleasure of our parties by their grandeur, but, on the contrary, have derived most satisfaction from those that were least dazzling, because there we have found most to love and esteem.

I have been visiting the schools, and am really delighted with the interest taken in the instruction of the rising generation, and with the good sense displayed in the management of many of the schools established by individuals, or supported by subscriptions. But next week we are to visit the greatest example of this species of munificence, at Mr. L——'s, in the county

of Wicklow, where we are invited to pass some days. Yesterday we dined at the observatory (about six miles from Dublin) with Dr. B——, professor of astronomy, an amiable and engaging man, who is *matched* as well as *married*. Our party was small but uncommonly agreeable, and the day rendered particularly interesting, by the pains taken by Dr. B—— to explain the curious apparatus in the observatory, which is, it seems, unequalled. In the evening we returned to Dublin, Mrs. W— and her daughters and we in our two carriages. On ascending a hill which gave us a view of the city, we beheld it in a blaze; one continued stream of light evincing the interest taken in the glorious victory. Even the cottages a mile from town were illuminated; and as we advanced the spectacle increased in splendour. The principal streets were so crowded we were often obliged to stop; but meeting with the greatest civility from the innumerable mul-

titude, all making way for us as soon as possible. Not even Bath could be more quiet and orderly, than the hundreds of thousands assembled in these streets. You have no idea of the beauty of Dublin; the Liffy running through the midst, with its seven bridges; and adorned on each side by handsome buildings, which seemed last night to set the water on fire, so finely did it reflect the illumination. The streets are in general wide, and the squares larger than those of London. Indeed there is no comparison between London and Dublin in point of beauty. All that I have hitherto seen of Ireland far exceeds my expectations, and exceeds also the descriptions given of it by any traveller that I know; it is however no place for persons of middling fortune. A carriage is here as necessary as in London, but certainly kept at less expense.

A young gentleman, who sets out for Edinburgh to-morrow, having kindly offered to take charge of a letter, I have stayed at home this morning in order to scribble as much as possible to our friends in J— C—, and have indeed made such a scribble of it, that I fear it will cost some trouble to make it out. But my nerves are really shook to pieces with all this racketing, which I would not go on with for any consideration: nor could I if I would. It will, however, be something to talk over when we assemble round the chimney corner; and as there is little likelihood that I shall ever travel so far from *Auld Reekie* again, I am willing to make the most of it. On returning from the county of Wicklow, we go to the Bishop of M—'s, paying other visits on the road; but expect to be at E— T— about the 1st of August; thence to the Earl of H—'s, and thence to our friends in the county of Monaghan, where we have endless invitations.* If possible we shall go

round by the Giants' Causeway, on leaving Monaghan for Belfast; but this will be according to the weather. I am thus particular, that I may not run any risque of losing a letter from you; and hope you will let me hear from you between the 1st and 10th of next month, addressed to me at ——————.

And now, my dear friends, would I thank you both for the infinite gratification I have received from your approving, but alas! too partial criticisms on my book: I shall, however, only say, that you indeed rejoiced me, and have given me confidence of being found right in the main, however liable to censure from critics of less generous or expansive hearts.

My fingers are so stiff with writing, that I shall only add, that the trio here unite in best love to the dear sisters, with your cordially affectionate friend,

E. Hamilton.

To Miss J— B—.

George Street, Edinburgh,
Dec. 15th, 1813.

As my dear friend is always willing to accept of a letter from me, when I can contrive to make leisure for writing, she will not be displeased with me for not having written to her when to find leisure was impossible.

Instead, therefore, of wasting time in attempting to appease anger that has no existence, I shall proceed to give you some account of myself, since I had the pleasure of addressing you from Clifton. After paying a visit in Wilts, and spending a few weeks at the delightful village of Hagley, where I enjoyed the pleasure of strolling at liberty through those lovely groves and lawns that had been early consecrated by imagination, and still seemed peopled by

the shades of the illustrious dead, we proceeded into North Wales; thus exchanging the beauties of cultivation for the rude grandeur of the romantic and picturesque. The charm was, perhaps, augmented by contrast: for I believe the scenery of Wales was never more admired or enjoyed than by our little party. In addition to the charms of nature, we enjoyed the pleasure of society, in spending two days at —— with *the ladies*, as they are emphatically called by the villagers; and left them with regret to pursue our journey to Holyhead; whence we set sail for Dublin, and after a pleasant, though slow passage, had the good luck to enter the bay of Dublin, just as the rising sun illuminated its fine prospects, which did, indeed, far surpass my expectations in beauty. I may say the same of the city itself, and of the surrounding country, but have no room for particular description.

You may believe, that the kindness of our friends, and the extraordinary and unmerited attention paid us universally, did not tend to lessen the agreeable impression. Though engaged every day, and all the day, I never enjoyed better health than during the three weeks of perpetual bustle in Dublin: yet was I glad to change the scene for the greater tranquillity of the country. In the country, however, I found as little leisure as in the town. Wherever I went, there were still sights to be seen, and people to be introduced to, schools to visit, and schemes of improvement to be examined: so that I was kept upon the alert in body and mind. Of the hospitality of Ireland, it is enough to say, that we travelled upwards of three hundred miles in the kingdom, without having once had occasion to enter the doors of an inn. We went from friend to friend, zig-zag through the heart of the country, till we reached the north: but, I think, of all the visits we

paid, that which would be to you most interesting was our visit to E—. I rejoiced to hear that you and Miss E— had met in London; but to see her to advantage — indeed, to form any idea of her excellence, she must be seen at home. There, the sweetness of her disposition, the greatness and simplicity of her character, is continually exciting one's admiration and respect: and there Mr. E— appears in far more favourable colours than in mixed society; so that he gained every day on our esteem. The rest of the family are amiable and agreeable; and all seem united to each other in bonds of the most perfect sympathy. — But I must have done with Ireland, and hasten to the land of cakes; where we arrived in safety, though, by an accident on our journey from Port Patrick, we caught such severe colds as to be, for some weeks after our return to Edinburgh, obliged to submit to complete confinement. Happily, of the friends we left,

we found almost all as well and happy as we left them; but still regret the blank which the deaths of our good friends, Lord W— and Lord C—, has made in our society.

To convince me that you are in perfect charity with me, notwithstanding my long silence, I trust you will soon favour me with a letter. I hope you received the essays, and shall rejoice to hear that they in any part meet your approbation. Adieu. In love to your sister, mine cordially joins with

Your ever affectionate friend,

ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Miss J—— B——.

George Street, July 9th, 1814.

It was only what I might have expected from the kind heart of my dear friend; yet consciousness of my own sad delin-

quency did so mightily enhance her generosity, in writing to me before setting out on her summer's tour, as to excite the warmest gratitude. I thank you again and again for your delightful letter; and rejoice in the prospect it affords me of your spending the summer in the very way that to my imagination seems most fraught with enjoyment. I shall be impatient to know where to look for you, that I may follow you in my mind's eye, as you wander among the mountains with which I so much longed to get better acquainted, but which, little as I saw of them, made so deep an impression, that in my dreams I see them still. I hope you staid long enough at Capel Cerig to give you an opportunity of exploring the beauties of its glens; and that you have found at Caernarvon such accommodation as you like, or at least find tolerable. But if you have not there found what is agreeable, I should recommend it to you to remove without loss of time to

Aber, near Conway, where there is a small country inn, part of which is fitted up for lodgings. The situation is beautiful and retired; and (as a lady who had spent a summer there told us) the lodgings very cheap, very quiet, and very comfortable. She provided her own breakfast, tea, and supper; but got her dinner from the inn, which saved all trouble, and cost a mere trifle. Had we not stopped at Hagley, we should have gone to Aber, on the faith of her description, and intended staying for a month. The same lady had tried Caernarvon; but could not there find accommodation out of the town, and the town she did not like; the recollection of which circumstance has induced me to give you this detail.

I am not afraid of Wales falling short of your expectation; and, if the weather is favourable, am sure its scenery will not disappoint you: but I fear this summer

will not be so propitious to rural enjoyment as the last. It is here cold and gloomy. After more than two months of bitter east-wind, and continued drought, we have now got cold rains: but the rain has come too late to save the green crops, which in this neighbourhood are completely destroyed, as is also the small fruit, to the utter ruin of the poor people, who depend on their great strawberry gardens for support. I am told, that some who pay hundreds of rent will not sell ten pints of berries this season. The poor inn-keepers in Scotland are likely to be equal sufferers, though not entirely from the weather, but from the ill-wind (to them) that blows every one to France. The genius of the Lakes now sits solitary on the deserted Trosachs; nor do Ben Lomond's echoes return the sound of an English voice. I feel a strong desire to visit them in their forlorn condition; but, alas! my poor purse has not yet so far recovered from the fatigue of our last year's

journey, as to be able to undertake an expedition of any length; for which I am truly concerned at present, on account of a young friend, Miss G——, now on a visit to us, and to whom I should like to show all that is most remarkable in our Scottish scenery. We must, however, for the foresaid reason, keep within a certain distance of Edinburgh; and, to my great mortification, be condemned to pass the summer without losing sight of stone walls. And from this time forward we shall have nothing but walls to look at, as the town will be in a few days deserted by all we know.

How tantalising it was to leave London without shaking hands with the Emperor! How often, in breathing the pure air of the Welsh mountains, have you thought with envy of the happiness enjoyed by the multitudes who were stifling in the royal crowd? I really pity you, when I reflect on the

cause you have for self-reproach, in going a rambling among hills and glens, and woods, and waterfalls, when you might, like some of my acquaintances, have been enjoying the delight of sitting in a carriage morning after morning, for hours at a time, jammed in a crowded street, listening to the hum that announced the approach of somebody, — no matter who — an emperor or a cossack, a prince or a page. Yet, seriously, I am pleased with the expression of the public sentiment, in the eagerness evinced by all ranks to see the illustrious chiefs who had so eminently distinguished themselves by their noble conduct.

We had a charming sermon from Mr. A. on the thanksgiving: I never heard a more sublime flow of eloquence. But, except by the people whose friends have been restored by the peace from long captivity, the blessings attending the happy event seem to be little regarded. Numbers have

gone from this to visit Paris: and of these many have returned, with very different accounts of things. The contradictory and opposite statements are to me very amusing. But I expect soon to be gratified with a better and fuller account of the present state of France than I have yet received. Mr. A——'s two sons, P. T., and Mr. S. A——, are now on their return home; and from the opportunities afforded by their introductions, and the good sense and talent of observation common to all the party, I am sure they will return fraught with valuable information.

Have you heard of *Waverly*—a novel supposed to be from the pen of W. S——? I have only seen the first volume; but was so charmed with it, that I am all impatience for the remainder. It is quite Scotch, and gives such a picture of a state of society and manners now obsolete, as appears to me invaluable. You have of

course seen the *Queen's Wake*, by the Ettrick Shepherd. I have become acquainted with the author; — a plain man, of rustic, but not vulgar manners, and certainly possessed of no common talents.

My sister unites with me in a thousand kind regards to you and yours. Adieu, my dear Mrs. J——, believe me ever affectionately,

Your faithful
ELIZA HAMILTON.

To Miss J—— B——

George Street, Edinburgh,
March 7th, 1815.

My dear friend,

I thank you for my delightful journey. Little did I think that I should ever again climb steep hills, or ramble over rocks and mountains. But with what ease did you contrive to transport me into these upper

regions, there to enjoy with you the beauties and the grandeur of nature's majesty, unalloyed by any mixture of fatigue or terror. What a pity that you could not speak that "pretty Welsh." I question if Mortimer himself felt more, from his want of knowledge of the language, when he listened to the sweet voice of Glendower's daughter. Pretty certain I am, that he would not have made such good use of the power of conversing with the ancient Britons in their native tongue, as my friends would have made. Wisely, however, has it been ordained, that this diversity of language should subsist, to check the spirit of wandering, and give to the people of one tongue a central point of union in the enjoyment of one common good, — a good, from which emanate all those sympathies that are the life of life, the very soul of existence. In my younger days, I thought only of going abroad to *see*; and imagined, that in seeing strange countries,

which had in description excited my curiosity, my pleasure would be immeasurable. But of late years I have become sensible, that if debarred from all intercourse with the natives of a foreign region, all I could see would go a short way to gratify my mind. Were it not for this obstacle, I should still, old and frail as I am, retain the same desire for visiting the Continent which formerly possessed me; and I confess I have, since the return of peace, had some little hankerings after taking a peep at France. But the better I become acquainted with the French character and manners, the less do I feel inclined to their society; and though I might become soon familiar enough with the language to understand their conversation, I question whether I should find it worth listening to. Of Italian I know nothing; and am now too old to learn. But of the influence of a southern climate on health, I still think so highly, that had not this winter proved

more favourable to me than many of its predecessors, I believe I should have been tempted to make arrangements for spending the following one in the south of France. Thank God, I do not now feel any necessity for turning my back on *Auld Reekie*; so here we are stationary for at least another year. The return of a young relation, who has been from a child with his mother's friends in France, is an additional motive for our remaining in Edinburgh. We invited him to spend the winter with us, in order to give him an opportunity, by attending the classes at our university, to form a judgment of the comparative advantages of Scotch and French education; and at the same time to give to him and his sister, who lives with us, the inexpressible pleasure of being again united, after so long a separation. It has happened very opportunely for us to have had such support for our spirits this winter, which has been more fraught with calamitous

events to our friends than any season within my recollection. Of those with whom we have most deeply sympathised, Mrs. G—— is the only one of whom you know more than the name. When just beginning to recover from the deep wound inflicted by the death of an amiable daughter, she received accounts of the death (in India) of the son who has ever been the pride of her life, and the object of her fondest hopes. He was, indeed, by all accounts, an extraordinary young man: and so severely has his loss been felt, that I greatly doubt whether his mother and sisters will ever recover the blow. * * * *

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Let no one say that imagination does not operate on this side the Tweed! What do you think of "*Discipline?*"—of "*Waverley?*"—of "*Guy Mannering?*" Are they not all excellent in their way? The first cannot be considered as a picture of life: it must be judged of merely as an illustration of a

theory; and, as such, has many beauties. The two last are portrait pieces of first-rate excellence; the painter a Gerard Dow—not a Michael Angelo; but in his own peculiar department comes near perfection. Though the name of Scott does not grace the title-page, it is seen in every other page of both performances.

Farewell! and, with love from my sister and self to you and yours, believe me ever with cordial affection truly *yours*,

E. HAMILTON.

To Miss J. B——.

114. George Street, Edinburgh,
Oct. 2d, 1815.

I have just learned from Professor Y—, that my dear friends, instead of being, as I supposed, on some country expedition, have been quietly enjoying themselves at home through the summer; and that a

letter will, in all probability, find them still at H———. Long, long ere now, should I have written to thank my dear Mrs. T—— for her kind attention to my friend Mrs. W——; but my mind has been kept in such an anxious and harassed state, by a succession of melancholy events, that I could not write without communicating some part of that gloom which hung upon my spirits. Thank God one of the darkest corners of the clouds has cleared off, without bursting on my head; but how terrible it appeared you will imagine, when I tell you, that, for some months, my sister's health seemed every day to decline, and at length became truly alarming. She was attended by Drs. T—— and G——, but got no better, until we happily thought of trying the effect of a medicinal Spa; and went to Pitcaithly Wells, in the neighbourhood of Perth. Her recovery commenced, I believe, with the first draught of the water, and went on

progressively, so that before we left our rural retreat, she was restored to nearly her former state of strength and spirits. Not choosing the bustle of an hotel and public table, we took lodgings at a farm-house, where we were very comfortable: and as we had fine weather, and a variety of beautiful walks, enjoyed ourselves exceedingly, without finding it necessary to enter into any of the gaieties, or adopting any of the modes of our more dashing neighbours. Their example in one particular, however, we should have gladly followed; for dearly should we have liked to make excursions to the many pretty places that were within the distance of a morning's ride. But the expense attending such indulgencies (having to send five miles for a carriage) induced us to restrict ourselves to one single *outing*, and that was indeed a delightful one, as it took in Perth and its immediate vicinity, and all the beauties of Dunkeld. In the middle of August we returned to

Edinburgh, after an absence of seven weeks, and found the town very empty, but still containing some valued friends. Of these, indeed, most were labouring under distress of body or mind; exacting from us, in both instances, a sincere tribute of sympathy. Let me not, however, touch on circumstances too mournful to be lightly passed from to other themes.

We had the pleasure last winter of becoming acquainted with a very interesting and agreeable stranger, Mrs. D—, who is, I believe, not unknown to you, as I perfectly recollect having seen and admired her mother at H—, where you introduced me to her. I regret Mrs. D—'s leaving Edinburgh just as I was beginning to find that longer intercourse would have led to increased attachment — she every day I saw her advanced in my esteem. But she is marked in the leaves of my white book, which I always turn to with

gladness when any thing occurs to vex me with human nature. *Apropos* — I am quite charmed with the description which Professor Y— gives me of your niece; for what so charming as to find our own prognostics verified? I was sure she would fulfil them in all essentials; but it has happened to so many of my young friends, to have the gems of heart and mind a little marred in the polishing, or their genuine lustre spoiled by the varnish of affectation and self-conceit, that it delights me to hear of her having so entirely escaped these evils: and I heartily congratulate you on the happines you must derive from such a child.

We also have reason to rejoice in *our* children, the C—s. We expect the youngest of the two sisters to return to us immediately, with her younger brother, who was so long in France, and now attends the classes here, where he thinks he derives much more benefit from the lectures, than he did from the more eloquent

but less solid lectures in Paris. Nothing appears to be more astonishing than that any people in their senses should take their children to France for education. It is, however, not seldom done. Adieu, and believe me, that in heart and spirit, you are ever dear to

Your truly affectionate

ELIZA HAMILTON.

A FRAGMENT.*

January 3d, 1802.

At your request, my dearest sister, I take up the pen to transcribe, with some accuracy, what I have at different times expressed to you as the result of my most serious investigation of that Epistle of St. Paul's which is deemed most abstruse and difficult of comprehension. You know I have not sufficient vanity to think, that I have so much more penetration than others, as to see distinctly what to them is dark:

* This Fragment is inserted, to show in what manner the writer was led to speculate on scriptural subjects, and with what views she afterwards pursued the enquiry. The Remarks on the Romans, to which *this* was an introduction, were left unfinished.

if objects appear to me more clear, it is by viewing them in a different light. It is, I suppose, from some deficiency of capacity, or rather, perhaps, from a deficiency in that stock of learning which is necessary in order to enter into the associations of the learned, that I have found all the commentators upon the sacred writings unsatisfactory and perplexing. I have, therefore, paid little attention to Scripture critics; and am, as you know, little versed in metaphysical theology. It is to the Scriptures themselves that I apply for the solution of every difficulty. It was by applying to them with seriousness, and studying them with assiduity, that, at an early period of life, I disentangled myself from the snares of scepticism, and obtained that conviction of the truth of Christianity, which has enhanced every blessing I have enjoyed, and alleviated every sorrow I have endured; and which now is, and I trust ever will be, my joy and consolation!

Experience and reflection alike convince me of the danger and impropriety of endeavouring to explain obscure expressions by abstract reasoning; or of taking any expression separately and apart, and by reasoning abstractly upon its apparent import, building a system of our own. When difficulties occur, I, therefore, endeavour to reconcile them, not to any particular and favourite theory, but to the general tenor and spirit of the author. My reasons for preferring this method are these:—In a translation, the general meaning of an author may be so well preserved, as to give us the clearest idea of the sense; but from the want of words in one language exactly adapted to convey the meaning of words in another, particular words or even sentences may be liable to perversion. Even in our own language, we find the ideas attached to general terms so vague and ill-defined, as to be the cause

of great confusion. The meaning of several words has, even in our own times, undergone considerable revolutions. The term *gay*, as an attribute of character, some years since called up the ideas of innocent cheerfulness and vivacity: it now, when used as an epithet (in speaking of a gentleman), denotes the extreme of profligacy. The term *affront* in England denotes one set of ideas, and in Scotland it is the sign of another; and is, probably, now used there in the same sense it was used two centuries ago in England. If this may happen in so short a time, can we imagine that the most able scholars are now capable of pronouncing with certainty on the particular associations attached to every general term, in languages that have long been obsolete? Impossible! It is by analogy and comparison alone that they can be any longer ascertained. But even so, the task is attended with insurmountable difficulties.

In the customs and manners of every country there are peculiarities, which give rise to new combinations of ideas; — combinations, into which no stranger can enter. The words which denote these combinations can, therefore, only be intelligible to those who are familiar with the ideas they denote. With respect to the languages of antiquity, this is now impossible. To take, therefore, any one expression of any ancient writer, and to argue from it that he holds opinions contrary to the general tenor of his writings, is, in my opinion, doing injustice to the cause of truth. I do not believe that there is a doctrine, however absurd, which might not be established from isolated passages picked out on purpose. Yet this appears to me to have been generally the course pursued by those, who, having embraced with ardour the speculative opinions of any particular sect, search the Scriptures for confirmation of their peculiar doctrines. No book in the New Testament has been

more frequently applied to in this way than St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. In my examination of its contents, I shall pursue a different plan. Firmly believing the Apostle's mission to be from God, and persuaded that what he taught as the doctrines of Christianity to the disciples of former times, is still of universal application, it is with humble diffidence, but conscientious integrity, that I presume to *set about* the momentous task. Still, however, persuaded that I ought to use my own reason, I shall use it, *though not in pride or in presumption.*

REMARKS

ON THE

REVELATION.

February 26th.

HAVING now finished a very attentive perusal of the book of Revelation, I with shame confess the prejudice which has hitherto prevented me from paying any degree of attention to its contents. Knowing how much this book has puzzled the learned, I dare not presume to rest much dependence on my own discernment; but am inclined to think that this, like many other allegorical writings, is rendered more difficult and obscure, by the very pains that have been taken to throw light upon it. Surely, St. John did not address this book

to theologians, or to the deeply skilled in human learning. To the disciple of Jesus, the rise and fall of empires, — the worldly prosperity of families or of individuals, must have appeared matters of trivial importance. Prophecies upon such subjects were given to the Jews, for the very obvious purpose of confirming their faith in the promised Messiah. But his kingdom, we are expressly told, was not to be of this world. From the commencement of his reign on earth, to the consummation of his power in the regions of eternal glory, all became spiritual. Of what description are the enemies of that kingdom? Surely spiritual must be opposed to spiritual. If the kingdom of God is not of this world, it is not against this world that the attacks of its enemies will be directed. Consequently, those events which begin and end in merely worldly motives, — events which, though they deeply affect the temporal happiness of multitudes, have no influence on their

spiritual state, are no longer to be viewed as the subjects of divine revelation.

Another consideration occurs to me. The whole tenor of our Saviour's doctrines agrees with this view of the comparative insignificance of things temporal; for while we find him ever ready graciously to instruct the disciples in all that was necessary to salvation, we may observe how instantly he checks the spirit of curiosity, when it led to enquiry after temporal events.

The same heavenly mindedness runs through all the writings of the Apostles; and if this book is the work of an Apostle, we shall, doubtless, find it to have been dictated by the same regard to the spiritual interests of those for whose use it was intended. It is, then, in vain that we search it to discover how long this or that dynasty will last, or how far this or that monarchy will extend. If the revelation is

from Heaven, we shall know it by its fruits. It will partake of all that has been revealed under the gospel; tend to exalt our nature, to correct our judgments, to enlighten our understandings, and to purify our hearts. The christian life is represented by St. Paul as a warfare; and, in the same figurative language, we are told by him what sort of armour we ought to put on when we engage in it. By St. John, it appears to me, that we are warned concerning the enemies with which we have to combat.

It was seen by Divine Wisdom, that, in different stages of society, these enemies of our souls would wear different aspects; that every age would have its own peculiar vices and peculiar errors: and by divine mercy this emblematical representation of these was given in the Apocalypse to awaken our vigilance and secure our faith. Feeling this impression to be salutary, I am

inclined to believe the view that occasioned it to be just.

February 27th.

In order to keep in mind the result of my observations on the Apocalypse, I shall, from day to day, write down the remarks that occur on each particular chapter.

CHAP. I.

It is, I believe, from the Gospel and Epistles of St. John, that the word Trinity has been considered to derive support. But here "he who bare record of the word of God," expressly speaks of "the revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave unto him to show his servants*, things which must shortly come to pass." How different this from the language of the Athanasian Creed, which in its attempt to explain the mysterious union of the divine nature, utters what is at the same time revolting to piety and to common sense!

V. 3d.—The blessing here pronounced on him that *keepeth* the words, &c. points to a practical use to be made of what follows.

V. 4th—8th.—The testimony here given to the divinity of our Saviour is very striking. He is placed far above all orders of created beings; *the only description that is to our present capacities comprehensible.* But while his relation to God is enveloped in mystery, his relation to us is set forth in terms that excite the most lively gratitude.

V. 9th, 10th, 11th.—Very striking, this representation of the vision; which, by its impression on both senses, left no doubt of its reality.

V. 12th, to the end.—I know not how the learned interpret the term candlestick. To me it seems to signify all those ordinances and institutions which serve as means

for preserving the divine light of religion in the soul. Among these the Son of God is seen to walk, emblematically clothed with human nature, as with a garment, yet bearing proofs of the divine. The two-edged sword of revelation is represented as proceeding from his mouth; and all the Christian graces and virtues, are the stars which he bears in his hand, and which, in the last verse, are said to be messengers (angels) sent into the churches. Not to the churches of Asia alone, but to all the churches of Christ, — to every denomination of Christians, have the pure precepts of the Gospel been preached. The day star from on high has visited us: may I never cease to remember whence its light proceeded, nor refuse to be guided by it in my course!

CHAP. II.

Whether the churches here addressed, are to be considered as congregations of Christians; or whether the term *church*, be used in a sense merely figurative, makes little difference to us: but as the blessing pronounced in the exordium extends to *all* who keep the words which are herein written; and as in other places the prophecy seems to have been intended for the benefit of as many as believe, I am led to conclude, that under the figure of a church, or body of Christians, the Prophet gives a description of the peculiar excellencies, and peculiar errors, common to numbers of those who had embraced the faith; and this doubtless with a view to recommend the excellencies to our imitation, and to keep us on our guard against the errors into which even the most perfect were seen to fall.

V. 2d. — Patience, perseverance, and impartial investigation, are the virtues first mentioned with praise. Yet these, however laudable, were not to be deemed sufficient for securing the divine favour, unless accompanied by that pure spirit of divine love, which had at first excited them. What a warning does this hold forth! What an example does it exhibit!

V. 8th.—The second is addressed to those who are under tribulation, and addressed to them by Him who suffered for their sake. "The first and the last, which was dead *and is alive.*" Thus reminding them that his sufferings terminated in glory. And here it is to be remarked, that it is these alone who were represented as being tried by poverty and tribulation, who are passed without censure. With them no fault is found. They are only exhorted *to continue faithful unto death*, that they may obtain the crown of life. Such are the real advantages of

those afflictions, which, to the world, seem most grievous, and which sometimes stagger the faith of even good people, when they fall upon the righteous. Under the figure of the Church of Pergamos, a very different description of persons are presented to our view. These are appointed to trials of a very opposite nature from the last. They are surrounded by temptation. They live *where Satan dwelleth.* In this, and many other passages, the term *Satan* seems to be used as a personification of pride, luxury, and the other selfish passions; and in addressing the persons who are assailed by them, our Lord is described by no other attribute than as the Author of Revelation. It is by that two-edged sword, which he has put into their hands, that persons thus circumstanced are to combat the world and its temptations. But, alas! how often do those who are thus tempted, even when they do not deny the faith, sacrifice to the idols which are through every

age worshipped by the worldly minded! Nor is it the idols of pleasure and ambition only against which we are warned, but against all which does not agree with the strictness of the divine commandments. How deserving is this of the most serious consideration! How many of the world's idols receive the homage of our hearts!

V. 18th.—The attributes of omniscience and omnipresence are here introduced as belonging to the Saviour of the world, who is, v. 19, represented as viewing with complacency, the charity, and faith, and patience, and persevering ardour of his servants, whose faults are at the same time objects of his high displeasure. The virtues attributed to the persons here described, are of a very amiable class. In our own eyes, and in the eyes of our fellow creatures, they would render us almost perfect. Yet even with all these virtues in our possession, our spiritual life may be for-

feited. A Jezebel may seduce us to the worship of human inventions. Not idols of gold and silver made with hands, but idols of opinion, of system, of party; idols formed by the imagination, adopted by prejudice, and supported by pride. It is to this species of idolatry alone, that the Christian possessed of faith, and abounding in charity and good works, can possibly be seduced; and from this species of idolatry, who, alas, is entirely free?

CHAP. III.

The character described under the figure of the Church of Sardis, has fewer pretensions to piety than the last mentioned. It is to it, therefore, that the Christian virtues and graces (*the seven stars*) are presented, as the attributes of the founder of our faith. How striking is the warning here given to those who have a name of being Christians, but are destitute of

the spirit that giveth life! How mercifully does our blessed Lord exhort such to "*be watchful*, to strengthen *the things which remain*, and which are ready to die!" How many are in this state! Yet, concerning those who appear to be of this description, we have evidently no right to judge; for we are expressly told, that even among these seemingly unrighteous persons, there are *many* who have escaped the corruptions of the world, many *who walk worthy, and whose names shall not be blotted out of the book of life*, but confessed by the Saviour for his, *before* the *Father*, and *before his holy angels*. I know not that there is any passage in Scripture which more directly militates against the spirit of censure than this. In the passage which follows, how great is the encouragement given to those who retain an anxious desire to perform their duty, who have still a *little strength*, and have *not denied* their Saviour's name. These are represented as having

resisted temptations to infidelity, and the false doctrines which lead to it; and, as an incitement to perseverance, they are reminded, that it is He who hath the key of David; He, the promised Messiah, who openeth the gates of immortality; and that, when he openeth, *no man* can shut them. To those who have even but a *little strength*, these gates are opened by the Redeemer; and such are here assured, that if they keep the word of his patience, they will be preserved from temptation; and if they exert themselves faithfully, none shall take from them the crown of life. After considering the import of this passage, who can pay any regard to the anathemas pronounced by the adherents of one sect against those of another. When Christ shutteth, no man openeth. But who shall presume to declare the counsel of the Eternal? Who shall presume to give to man that power which God has, by divine revelation, expressly delegated to his Son?

V. 14th. — Lest this diffidence and humility, which ought to restrain us from pronouncing sentence of condemnation on our fellow servants, should lead to indifference, a very striking example is held forth in the passage that immediately succeeds. The lukewarmness here described as offensive to God, was by no means the vice of the early ages. The errors which spring from enthusiasm, are mentioned as preceding it in the catalogue. But to some or other of those errors, individuals are, through every age, exposed; and perhaps in the present time there is none to which we are more generally exposed than to this of lukewarmness with regard to religion. With respect to its forms, or to the preservation of the establishment, we are perhaps not cold; but with regard to its spirit and its influence, are we not too indifferent? If we are neither cold to the one, nor warm to the other, we are in the state characterised under the figure of the Laodicean

church, and are in imminent danger of final rejection. The figure employed by the Apostle to describe that rejection, is unfortunately disgusting to our delicacy. But the subject is too awfully interesting to admit of the application of our rules of fastidious criticism. God has here in mercy declared to us, that persons in this state of lukewarmness he will reject; and that we may not be at any loss to discover how far this character applies to us, it is very particularly described.

V. 17th.—"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; *and knowest not* that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The meaning of this is sufficiently obvious. Now the question is, Have I ever said this to my heart? Have I ever solaced myself with the idea of being sufficiently good, sufficiently righteous? Am I deeply conscious of

my own blindness, my own poverty, my own deficiencies in every thing? Of God alone do I ask to have my wants supplied? His Word is the "gold tried in the fire;" his Holy Spirit the ointment that enables the eyes to see; and the merits of Jesus Christ the white raiment by which alone we can effectually be clothed.

CHAP. IV.

The mysterious representation of the majesty of God, is here displayed in terms that bear so strong a resemblance to those used by Isaiah (Ch. vi.), as to render it extremely probable that both employed in their descriptions emblems that were perfectly intelligible and familiar to the orientals, though they be now to us obscure. Still, *the throne* is an appropriate symbol of Majesty; and the lightnings and thunders that proceeded from it, equally appropriate emblems of Power.

The four-and-twenty Elders I take to be no other than the ancient Prophets, who had fulfilled their divine mission, and obtained the reward of their fidelity. The Sea of Glass is evidently an emblem of purity, through which the worshippers of the Eternal Jehovah passed to the throne of his grace. These accepted worshippers of the Most High are of the four quarters of the earth, different in form and appearance, but all uniting in acknowledging the majesty, and power, and holiness of the one true God: and when these strangers, once accounted aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, held, under whatever character they appeared, whether learned or ignorant, weak or powerful, to be alike unclean, — when they raise their voices in Heaven to give glory, and honour, and thanks to Him that sits upon the throne, the prejudices that subsisted against them vanish; and all the Israel of God, rejoicing in the extent of his empire, join

in the song of praise, and cast their crowns (the emblems of distinction) before the throne, saying, "Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created!"— Who that believes in the words of this prophecy, can, after duly considering the import of this striking passage, dare to put limits on the mercy of God? What, indeed, have we to do with the fruitless and speculative conjectures, so rashly formed, concerning the rejection of this or that nation, or body of individuals? The practical use to be made of this and similar passages, is to restrain the pride that incites us to these rash judgments; and to rejoice in the goodness of God, and in the hopes he has thus created of the comprehensiveness of his mercy.

CHAP. V.

The book with the seven seals is very plainly intended to represent the mysteries of our redemption — mysteries which no man in heaven or in earth could have explored, but which were, as far as was necessary, revealed to us through the Messiah. And here it may be remarked, that the inspired writers invariably acknowledge the inadequate capacity of human intellect for comprehending the mysteries of God. *They* never pretend to understand what is beyond the limits of human understanding. Even here, where things of a spiritual nature are described by emblems and allusions, borrowed from sensible objects, no attempt is made minutely to explain what is to human minds incomprehensible. In the 4th verse, the grief of the prophet, in contemplating the last state of man is finely illustrative of the doctrine of the Fall. In the 5th, the hopes held

forth by the ancient prophets in the promise of the Messiah, are emphatically, though concisely displayed. To human nature *they* raised their voice of consolation, declaring that moral evil (that inexplicable mystery), should be overcome by "*the Lion of the tribe of Judah.*" Not as a lion, however, did he appear in strength, to terrify and to destroy; but in meekness did he come; and, under the appropriate emblem of meekness, he is, throughout the rest of the chapter, presented to our view. The horn, still the badge of honour in Abyssinia, was then the well-known insignia of victory and honour: it was the laurel of the Jews. The seven horns are consequently descriptive of multiplied honours and conquests obtained by the Messiah over all the enemies of his spiritual kingdom. In the spirit of God he went forth to conquer; and the superior degree in which he enjoyed that divine spirit "which was not given by measure unto him," is al-

luded to by being multiplied into seven spirits. No sooner is the salvation wrought by this divine personage declared, than the four beasts, whom I suppose to represent the unenlightened of the human race in the four quarters of the world ("those who having not the law, were a law unto themselves," and who walked up to the light they possessed); and the four and twenty elders (who represent the descendants of Abraham, the believers in the promised Messiah), join with all the redeemed in an exstatic acknowledgment of gratitude to God the Father, and to the meek and holy Jesus, for the unspeakable blessings of redemption. The comprehensive nature of the redemption accomplished, is displayed in the song of praise in terms so clear as to be evident to the meanest capacity. Thanks are not offered because of partial favour shown to one nation, or to one description of people; but the golden harps were strung, and the prayers of the

saints (the golden vials full of odours) ascended to the Mediator of the new covenant, who had declared the mysteries of God, suffered death for our transgressions, and redeemed us to God by his blood, "*out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, and made us to our God kings and priests."

As if this description of the extent of the divine mercy had not been sufficiently explicit, the Prophet beholds in the vision a numerous host of angels (messengers of instruction who had fulfilled their mission), and of the same description of persons whom he had formerly enumerated (Pagans, Jews, and Christians), surrounding the throne; "and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousand of thousands," i. e. incalculable. These repeat the song of praise, which is re-echoed by every order of intelligent beings throughout the creation of God. "And

every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and such as is in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever."

March 5th.

The 42nd chap. of Isaiah, read in church this afternoon, seems to have been the prototype of the above. On comparing them the resemblance appears so strong that it cannot possibly be thought accidental. St. John represents the prophecy of Isaiah to have been completely fulfilled; and in his use of the very terms employed in it, must have greatly confirmed the faith of the Jewish converts. In Isaiah the Druids (inhabitants of the rock) and the Magi (whose fire worship was celebrated on the tops of the mountains) are called, in the spirit of prophecy, to "give glory to the Lord." In the Revelations

they are described under the emblem of the beasts, as joining the number of the redeemed in praising him. Of a truth does the prophet elsewhere declare, that God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways!

CHAP. VI.

If we are to consider the four beasts, (a term which Mrs. Carter says ought to have been translated *living creatures*), as representing the whole Pagan world, whose various forms of idolatry may be traced to four distinct branches, the revelation here given will be understood to intimate that even these nations were comprehended in the Saviour's love, and made partakers of the blessings of redemption. Left to the light of nature, they submitted to the guidance of the passions. Pride, the most active of these, "went forth conquering, and to conquer." Ambition

"took peace from the earth," and there was given unto him a great sword. In process of time, the third seal was opened: Reason began to lift her voice, Philosophy declared the laws of justice, and virtue held forth to her votaries the promise of happiness. But when the fourth seal was opened, behold the result! so scanty was the nourishment which philosophy afforded to the mind that a fourth died of hunger. The spiritual life of the Pagan world was the morality of natural religion; but before the passions it fell; Death triumphed and Hell followed with him. The vices into which the Pagan world had sunk are described by St. Paul in lively colours. Here the same vices are described under appropriate emblems: but here the spiritual death is not said to have been universal. Some there still were in the heathen world who escaped it; and these are represented as crying out with amazement at the view of moral evils, thinking it inconsistent with

the justice of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe. But the mysterious ways of Providence were not yet to be explained. The lessons of their philosophers, the virtues they had preached, fell to the earth; *as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind.* In this and the succeeding verse, the downfal of the heathen superstitions is boldly delineated. Their systems, which had risen like mountains, were moved out of their places. A deep conviction of their deplorable condition and of their natural and accumulated depravity, seizes on all descriptions of persons: and their fear of the wrath of God is expressed in the strongest terms.

In this chapter I think it plain that the historied sketches of natural religion comprehend not only the ages of Paganism, but the whole bounds of time. It is the history of the human soul under the influence of Pagan principles. When such

a soul is awakened by the spirit of God and made to behold the inefficacy of those, it must naturally be led to feel its dangerous state, and to flee with earnestness from the wrath to come. But in thus speaking may we ever remember the words of our Lord, "What I say unto you I say unto all—Watch;" to us then watchfulness is no less necessary.

CHAP. VII.

"And after these things." This expression invariably denotes that a new scene is about to be pointed out to our view. In the last chapter the history of natural religion was completed. We may therefore expect in this to find some account of the progress of the Christian religion, which had, to the actual knowledge of St. John and his contemporary labourers, been established in the hearts of the converted, not by the preaching of human wis-

dom, but by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost. The time was now approaching when this spirit was no more to be externally manifested—by signs and wonders, and miraculous gifts. In this vision it was signified to the Apostle that these should be withheld. But lest he who had beheld their efficacy should fear that the withdrawing of these miraculous gifts should endanger the establishment of those divine truths to which they had given witness, he is expressly informed that these simple operations of the holy spirit should not be withheld until such numbers of Jews and Gentiles had been made converts to the faith, as would secure the permanency of the Messiah's kingdom, which according to ancient prophecy was to endure for ever and ever. These sincere and zealous converts, to whom the propagation of the gospel was henceforth to be committed, are pointed out to the Apostle, as being sealed by the angel of God. They are of all the

tribes of Israel, not only those who had kept the law, but of the tribes who for their idolatry and wickedness had been scattered among the nations and lost; nor these alone, but "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindred, and people and tongues." To represent the final salvation of these sincere believers the scene changes, and we are again transported to the celestial region of glory, pourtrayed by the same emblems as in the 4th chapter. The hymn of gratitude is again repeated; nor is any thing added to the description before given, except the allusion to the superior recompense bestowed on those who had proved their faith by their constancy in the midst of sufferings. Yet here I observe, that meritorious as this constancy might be, it was not their own merits, of which their robes of glory were formed. These robes were washed and purified in "the blood of the Lamb." *Therefore* are they "before the throne of

God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." In this there is nothing to which reason and conscience do not bear witness. Human nature is not capable of preserving the robe of innocence without spot or stain. When once soiled, all pretensions on account of purity are for ever forfeited. This seems to me to be evidently the doctrine of Revelation throughout. It is in this passage very *plainly and explicitly* declared.

CHAP. VIII.

The seventh seal of the book of Providence is now opened. To the ministration of his messengers of peace, the care of propagating the truths of the gospel is now committed. This spirit, whose extraordinary influence was, in the last chapter, represented under the figure of the four winds of Heaven, (probably, an

allusion to the description given of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, Acts, ii. 2.) was now withheld; and the preachers of the word, provided with no wonder-working powers, are only commissioned to make known and proclaim the goodness of God, manifested to the sons of men in the deliverance of the world by Jesus Christ. The happy effects of their pious labours in the early and purer ages of the church, is very plainly alluded to in the 3d, 4th, and 5th verses. But, alas! the sound of the trumpet of the angels — the preaching of the ministers of the gospel — began soon to produce other consequences than sending up unto Heaven the incense of praise and adoration. At the sound of the first who departed from the simplicity of gospel truths, the hail descended, and the fire of contention spread. By these, in the very first instance, *a third part* of those essential graces and virtues, which formed a constituent part of the Christian

character, was destroyed. The evil thus introduced was not remedied by the succeeding class of preachers; but became more conspicuous, and produced consequences still more fatal in the spiritual death of multitudes. False doctrines followed, and embittered the water of life; "and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." The natural consequence of this perversion of the word of truth was darkness. Yet even in the darkest ages, the sun — the light of life — was not utterly extinguished: it was only the third part of it that was smitten. But all the inferior lights, — all the doctrines of the first followers of the church — which had derived their light from the parent luminary, were likewise darkened. The miserable consequence of this state of darkness is finely expressed by the emblematical figure of an "angel flying through the midst of Heaven, saying, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth,

by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels that are yet to sound!" All that I learn from this chapter tends to confirm the opinion I have so long embraced, — that it is not in the peculiar creeds of any church, but in the word of God only, that we are to seek for the doctrines of salvation.

CHAP. IX.

When the light of gospel truth had been darkened by those who were sent forth to declare the glad tidings of salvation, the ministers of the word who immediately succeeded, produced by their doctrines a twofold misfortune to the Christian church. The allegory, by which this is in the spirit of prophecy declared by the Apostle, is, first, the fall of a star, or Christian virtue. This star is not represented as annihilated, but as changing its nature, and becoming active in the pro-

duction of evil. Surely, by no explanation can this be rendered more intelligible than by taking a view of the consequences produced by bigotry and superstition, which are in reality, *Faith* fallen from Heaven, and misdirected to inferior objects. Bigotry and superstition are the natural effects of darkening the light of the Gospel by the vain traditions of man. It is by this fallen star, that the bottomless pit of infidelity — atheism, and all manner of corruptions—is opened. From that bottomless pit ascends the smoke by which the light of the gospel is entirely darkened; and from that smoke proceed doctrines, that appear to have form and life, but which are immoral, and, consequently, hurtful. Yet the power of these reptiles is limited: they are not permitted to destroy the sincere in heart, though even these may for a time be made to suffer by the impression made on their minds, through the agency of these false and corrupt teachers. Minds thus infected by the

sting of the scorpion, may wish by scepticism to overcome their apprehensions of that future retribution, which is the life of conscience; but, we are told, when they seek relief in this spiritual death, they shall not find it. Conviction, when once complete, sets the mind at rest for ever. But though willing to believe that the Gospel was a fabrication, and Jesus Christ an impostor, they had not obtained the conviction in which they would have found the quiet of death. They were tormented, but not killed by the scorpions, by whose bite they had been poisoned.

V. 7. "And the shape of the locusts," &c. — The swarm of low and unworthy principles which proceed out of the smoke of infidelity, or false faith, are here particularly described. Pride, described by the same emblem as in the sixth chapter, where this most powerful and active principle of our fallen nature is represented by

the figure of the most active, vigorous, and useful of the brute creation, going forth conquering and to conquer, is here again exhibited as having once more obtained power and distinction. It wears, however, no longer its genuine form; but is now attached to the base and degenerate passions begot by superstition and bigotry. These assume to themselves crowns of gold, — the insignia of dominion. Yet their faces are as the faces of men: that is to say, though their pretensions to absolute dominion over the minds and consciences of their fellow-servants are so exorbitant, the principles they inculcate are no other than human inventions, which may all be traced to the operations of human passions and human absurdities. These swarms of doctrines, which wear the crown of pride, are in the eighth verse represented as ornamented by one of the attributes of beauty, yet with the teeth of a lion ready to devour their opponents. They are

covered with the breast-plates of infallibility, and in their pride are powerful to do mischief. The angel of the bottomless pit is the king who rules over them, and his name is *the destroyer!* That all this has been verified in the general history of the church, it is impossible to deny. But I fear it is in some respects the history of every church. Who that sets up the opinions of fallible man, as the infallible criterion of right or wrong in faith or practice, can read this description, without beholding his own image? Every individual who has worshipped these locusts with the golden crowns, may fear that he has in some degree done homage to the destroyer. It is very easy, and very comfortable, to lay all this at the door of the church of Rome; but I see no authority for making such sweeping explanations as exempt us from all share in the same offences. Every word of the New Testament I believe to be addressed individually to the soul of every

reader; and that a practical use is to be made of all its doctrines.

This chapter contains, in my opinion, a representation of the fatal consequences which have ensued from admitting a mixture of human doctrines to intermingle with and deface the purity of gospel truth. Hence the small effect which religion produces on the moral conduct of men who retain the form of religion without its power. Every church, nay, every sect, has sent forth its hosts of preachers, and persecutors, and let loose all the violence of pride and passion against those who did not receive its doctrines as the only means of salvation. These have done hurt in all directions; but they have not in any instance turned the heart to righteousness, or produced that moral purity and holiness, which our Saviour describes as the test of a true and lively faith. Whenever men, by an overweening fond-

ness for their own interpretation of any passage of Scripture, exalt it into an essential point of doctrine, they contribute to darken "the only true light that lighteth the world." In the support of that doctrine their glory becomes implicated: their selfish feelings are then excited, and pride takes arms in defence of the doctrines, of whose truth it now permits them not to doubt. It is by this base mixture of human inventions, that all attempts at enlightening the heathen have been defeated. O that missionaries would go forth in the simplicity of the gospel to preach only such doctrines as Christ and his Apostles preached! Then might the spirit of God be hoped for to assist their labours. Then might they put in the sickle in full confidence of an abundant harvest. But how can men expect that the Almighty should give his evident sanction to doctrines which rest on the authority of men? Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, may all be inspired with sufficient zeal: but

if it is a zeal for propagating the tenets of particular men, from zeal thus sullied by human inventions what is to be expected? They do not go forth, like the Apostles, in the power of the Gospel, because they do not go forth in its spirit. The fruitlessness of their efforts has strengthened the doubts of the sceptic concerning the first propagation of the Gospel. But by the companion of our Lord the circumstance was foretold; and in the prophecy I have now been considering, every corruption so insidiously alluded to in the arguments of the unbeliever, is so explicitly described by the Holy Ghost in this revelation of the things that should be hereafter, as to confirm the truth of all that the Scriptures teach. Had no such revelation as this been made, the apparent triumph of error, falsehood, and vice, might have shook the faith of true believers. But here the providence of God is laid open to our view, as far as is necessary towards establishing our faith in

his word, and our dependence on his promises.

CHAP. X.

The description of the angel in this chapter is in the true sublime of divine inspiration. Compare it with the imagery introduced into what are thought the finest compositions of the eastern or of the western poets, and how evident is its superiority! The corruptions that should darken the light of the Gospel having been fully described in the preceding chapters, this mighty angel comes not with the sound of a trumpet, to usher in a new doctrine; or to establish any new sect; but to declare that the time in which these were permitted to triumph over the simplicity of truth is closed, and "that time shall be no longer." Nothing can be more solemn than the manner in which this declaration is made, (v. 5. & 6.) In the 7th verse it

is added, "that in the days of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." This seventh ministration of the word is, then, not to consist in the preaching of human opinions or speculations. Before the commencement of that last era of Christianity, the time of these shall be finished. The little book, containing all these tenets of human invention, (for the support of which torrents of human blood have in every age been shed,) is represented as in the hand of the sixth angel, under whose ministration these errors and delusions are to be brought to a period. The nature of its contents is finely delineated in the allegory which follows, 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th verses. The eagerness with which these speculative theories have been embraced by their votaries, who have found the absurdities of the creeds and dogmas which they so readily swallowed to be in

the mouth sweet as honey, but which afterwards were found to produce only bitterness, is there finely described. Bitter, indeed, have been the fruits of all the controversies in which the Christian world has so eagerly engaged; — bitter the passions to which they have given rise, and very bitter the consequences to which they have invariably led.

CHAP. XI.

Here again the scene may be said to change. A comprehensive view of the reception and fate of the revealed word of God, throughout all ages of the world, is now displayed to the prophet. The knowledge of the Deity revealed to Adam, and to Noah, is here expressly said to have been trodden down by the Gentiles, whose subversion of that knowledge is described in the first and second verses. A superior power was however given to the

two witnesses, the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, though their triumph was not to be complete. So far indeed were they from being permitted to triumph, that their divine form was to be obscured, and enveloped in the garb of mourning and misery. They nevertheless were to be endowed with *power* until the knowledge of the Christian doctrines was sufficiently disseminated; after which they were for a time to lie dormant. Bigotry and superstition, and false faith, (the angel of the bottomless pit,) were to prevail against them. Yet the vital principle that was in them was not to be permitted to be destroyed. *The two witnesses* were again to stand upon their feet, unmutilated, uninjured; they were to arise from the seeming death to which they had been destined, and to produce terror in those who had rejoiced in their destruction. Can the history of the dark ages be more fully or more satisfactorily presented to our imaginations? To the

worldly-minded men, who look not beyond this earth, the superstitions and vain ceremonies of human invention must ever be more pleasing than the pure doctrines of the Bible. To such men its spirit is abhorrent, and its moral precepts are tormenting. Well then may they rejoice over the apparent death of the witnesses. But on their re-appearance, we learn that these deluded men should experience great fear and apprehension. A seventh part of the city which they had built to themselves, with materials of human invention, was then, according to the words of this prophecy, to fall. Even at the destruction of this seventh part, numbers were to be induced to turn to God, in terror of his judgments, and to give glory to the God of Heaven. This is the legitimate consequence of conversion to that truth declared by the *two witnesses*. Not glory to man, with whom all theories and creeds originate, but glory to the God of Heaven!

To him be glory for ever and ever. Here this scene, or view of the history of the gospel, closes. In the recovery of the witnesses, the second woe to the supporters of infidelity is fulfilled. But the kingdom of this world is threatened with a further diminution of its power. Another woe is denounced against it; and that third woe is said, v. 14., to come quickly. All having now access to the Bible, the purity of the doctrines that have been established on its authority may and will become matter of enquiry to every serious believer. The deference paid to human authority will no longer be so exorbitant, as to place human in competition with divine; it will only be such a deference as is due to human wisdom. The zealots of particular doctrines will then acknowledge, that the mysteries which God has been pleased to leave unexplained are not to be explained by the scanty limits of human understanding. Arrogant preten-

sion shall then be transformed to humility and meekness. "The kingdom of this world," (i. e. the different denominations of Christians imbued with worldly spirits,) "shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." The glorious consequences of this pure preaching of the gospel, are set forth in the succeeding verses, where they are displayed in the most lively colours. By the sound of the trumpet of this seventh angel, no bitter passions are to be engendered; no strife, nor animosity, nor hatred, nor wrath, nor persecution; no superstitious bigotry to darken the light of the Gospel, and to bring forth error and delusion from the bottomless pit; but thanksgiving, and glory, and praise, and universal gratitude to God, accompanying universal acknowledgement of his infinite justice and mercy. The vindictive passions which had so long intermingled with, and disfigured the truth,

shall then be spoken of in the past tense. "And the nations *were* angry." "And thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, (of the revealed word of God, which had for a while been destitute of life,) that they should be judged (or fairly considered); and that thou shouldest give reward to thy servants the prophets, and to those that fear thy name, *both small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.*" Let those who would exclude from the favour of God all who do not conform to the doctrines of their own little party, or faction, read this, and learn to restrain the spirit of intolerance, that *destroyer of the earth*, which God, in his good time, will assuredly destroy.

CHAP. XII.

The figure presented to our view in the opening of this chapter is declared to be allegorical; a sign under which some

thing is signified, improperly translated "Wonder."

Truth, eternal truth, is here finely described as clothed with the sun. The moon (opinions that are no further luminous than as they reflect the light with which truth is at all times invested) is under her feet; and the virtues, of which stars are, throughout this book, the invariable emblems, form the crown which adorns her head. Truth brings forth the revealed will of God, and is represented as being in pain until it be made known to man. Another allegorical personage is now introduced. The *selfish principle*, (represented under the figure of a red dragon,) with the attendant passions, which are displayed with horns and crowns, the insignia of triumph and dominion, in the different ages of the world. These, before the birth of Revelation, had effected the utter destruction of a third part of the virtues;

and when the doctrines of truth were promulgated, stood ready to devour and destroy them. The offspring of truth, he who came to bear witness to the truth, at length appeared; and having fulfilled his ministry, ascended to the throne of God. With him pure resplendent truth, truth in which there is no shadow of darkness, might likewise have been supposed to have ascended to the regions of celestial glory. But truth did not utterly forsake the earth: she dwelt, however, in obscurity. A place was prepared for her of God, and they who received her, nourished her in secret, so as to prevent her from perishing. In heaven (which is here the emblem of the Christian world) the ministers of God, the teachers of Christianity, fought against the selfish principle, and all the corrupt passions of the human heart. Long and arduous has been the conflict. The war against these corrupt passions has been carried on by the teachers of religion through every age, even

while pure truth was banished from the world. Still, under every form of doctrine, however in other respects corrupted, morality was held essentially connected with the doctrines of salvation. From what follows, v. 9., we are entitled to hope, that the victory shall at length be decided: that the selfish principle, and pride, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole earth, shall be overcome; and the ministers, or teachers of selfishness and pride, and their corrupt train of passions, shall be cast out with him. The triumph of religion over these corrupt principles, is, in v. 10., most beautifully expressed. The lesson given in it and the two succeeding verses comes home to every heart: nor perhaps can we take a more useful view of the whole subject, than by applying it to our own consciences, as representing the history of that conflict which has taken place in our own souls. We here learn, that the selfish principle,

and corrupt passions, must, of necessity, be subdued by the spirit of religion. And that it is not until this victory has been obtained, that we can expect to hear that voice in heaven, proclaiming that "*now* is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ;" "for the accusers of our brethren (the corruptions of our fallen nature, which rendered us obnoxious to the divine displeasure,) are cast down." The manner in which this victory is obtained, is here precisely stated. Not in our own strength, nor by our own merit, nor the power of our own reason; but "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony," i. e. the testimony of his disciples, the evangelists, and apostles. Faith in Christ, and in the promises declared in his holy word, are the only weapons by which the corrupt principle can be entirely subdued. This is consonant to experience. Therefore well may they who are members of that kingdom

of righteousness be called on to rejoice! Those who are called the inhabiters of earth, who are still under the dominion of worldly and sensual motives, are justly lamented, as insensible of their danger, and warned of the malignity of those passions which continue to persecute and to obstruct the progress of truth and revelation. By the prejudices and errors which these passions raise up against her, truth is often apparently discomfited; she hides herself for a season in the wilderness. But there she is nourished, and saved from the destuction that pride had prepared for her: even though prejudice should cast forth out of his mouth a flood to carry her off the earth, the earth itself, or unassisted human reason, will swallow up these prejudices by an exposure of their absurdity, and thus give assistance to the truth. The activity of pride, however, remains still unsubdued, and its enmity against the divine principle of truth continues to act

with undiminished malignity. With the children of truth (the doctrines which have proceeded from her) the dragon continues to make war. But what are the characteristic attributes of these doctrines? Do they belong to any sect in particular, so as to distinguish it for the peculiar child of truth? No. The remnant of her seed are described in explicit terms, as they "*which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*"

CHAP. XIII.

Again the scene changes: the Apostle represents himself as standing upon the sand of the sea, i. e. in full view of the fountain of purity, which in a former chapter is represented as surrounding the throne of God. It is from this profound source of holiness and truth, that a deformed monster is seen to spring. It in figure bears some resemblance to the super-

stitutions of paganism, and is by the Apostle denominated by the same epithet. Its heads, or doctrines, are however more numerous; and assume higher prerogatives, and assert higher claims. Its horns, or marks of honour and distinction, are numerous and conspicuous, and its crowns, the insignias of power and dominion, are equally numerous. It is in the second verse further described by the symbols of activity, perseverance, and strength. Yet it was not to these attributes that it was indebted for success, but to pride, the dragon which gave to superstition his power and his seat, and great authority. Another striking circumstance is to be observed in the description of this monster. Upon his heads covered with insignias of honour, we find the name of blasphemy; — blasphemy the proper epithet of all pretensions to sovereign authority over the minds of men. Pride may give to human authority power, and a seat, but every aim at establishing the

empire of human doctrines or superstitions is blasphemy against the supreme Giver of revelation. The prophet next in the spirit of prophecy describes the destruction of one of these branches of superstition, which was as it were wounded to death, v. 3. But the vital principle remained. The deadly wound was healed, and the world, so far from forsaking the errors which it had so fondly worshipped, continues to worship and idolize them; saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? From age to age has this cry been repeated by the fond idolizers of every dogma which was in the seat of authority. By every church which has pretended to arrogate to itself the attributes of divine wisdom "great things" have been spoken; and these "great things," these anathemas denounced against all who differed in opinion, are characterised as blasphemies! Bigotry, when embodied in the form of a party and endued with power,

is ever of a persecuting spirit. Sanctity of life, purity of faith, and simplicity of doctrine, are all abhorred by superstition; and hence that intolerance which is here described as making war upon the saints; nor, alas! is the war it wages ineffectual! The unhallowed passions, which are the weapons used in the warfare of intolerance, give deadly wounds to piety and virtue. They seldom fail to overcome the Christian spirit of love and peace, and to beget, through means of the resentments which they kindle, a spirit of revenge and retaliation, which gives a death wound to all the graces of the Christian life. We should be led to fear that from this conflict none could escape unhurt. But the Almighty even amid the reign of bigotry, and the triumph of error, has ever had true worshippers: nor will these sincere believers be permitted in the warfare of corrupt passions: "for their names are written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from the

foundation of the world." That this allegorical representation of those snares and temptations to which believers were to be exposed, after the miraculous interposition of the divine influence should cease to operate, was intended for the instruction of individuals throughout every age, is evident from the 9th verse, "If *any* man have an ear, *let him hear.*" It is surely to be regretted that the commentators on divine revelation, in their anxiety to establish some favourite speculation, have so much overlooked the proofs of divine wisdom evinced in that perfect knowledge of the human heart exhibited in every page of revealed religion. After having delineated, or rather sketched, the progress of bigotry and intolerance, the prophet thus describes the consequence which must ensue to blind zealots who have been forward to make converts to their peculiar tenets. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity. He that killeth with the

sword must be killed by the sword." And does not experience justify this assertion? Does not every attempt to impose the shackles of prejudice upon others, rivet our own prejudices? Does not the zeal that has been exercised by the bigotted of all persuasions in order to destroy in others the freedom of thought; the sword which kills the energy of the human mind, does it not inflict a deadly wound on the mind that directs it? In the zeal to support peculiar doctrines has not the life, the vital spirit of Christianity been lost? When this temptation assails us, (and who has it not in one shape or other assailed?) we have an example to refer to in "the patience and faith of the saints." In the conduct of those who were indisputably endowed with the spirit of God we have a pattern for our imitation. The zeal of the apostles of our Lord was purified from every mixture of the selfish principle. Pride did not in them connect the idea of self, of exalting

their own self-importance, with the success of their preaching. They preached the Gospel in its pure and simple elements; not exalting their own explanations of mysteries, or their own views of propriety, into infallible rules of faith or practice. St. Paul on the contrary expressly declares, when he spake from the dictates of his own reason, that what he said rested on no higher authority; and thus distinguished his own notions or opinions from the dictates of inspiration—the revealed will of God. This was the faith of the saints. And what patience did they evince in combating the prejudices of ignorance! Opposition brought not forth in them the spirit of retaliation, of hatred, malice, and revenge. The pattern of meekness and humility set before them by their Lord, was the example on which they formed themselves. Such was the patience and faith of the saints.

Verse 11th, to the end of the chapter. — That we may not deceive ourselves, by supposing that the spirit which has been delineated under the symbol of the beast belongs exclusively to one sect or denomination of Christians, we are here presented with a view of its influence successively exercised under forms apparently different. No sooner have pride, and bigotry, and superstition, ceased to give life to one form of human doctrine, than they are seen to animate some other, which is propagated with equal activity and equal fervour. To these opinions, when powerfully supported by texts of Scripture (the "fire from heaven" which every setter forth of doctrines eagerly brings down), the weakness of human reason does homage. They attract the reverence, the faith, and the worship which are only due to the Supreme Being, the fountain of light and truth. A belief in these peculiar opinions (which are

but the constructions and explanations of human reason) is represented, by those who espouse them, as essentially necessary to salvation. Whenever they obtain power, they insist on imprinting their mark — *the mark of conformity* — on all ranks and descriptions of persons. Nor to spiritual censures alone do they confine themselves. The spirit of intolerance reaches even to the injury of the temporal welfare of those who refuse the mark of conformity; — a mark contrived and executed by the deformed monster who sprung originally from the Gospel of purity and peace. It has been the aim of this deformed and degenerate spirit, in every age, to arrogate to itself the sole disposal of temporal honours, and temporal enjoyments; and "that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or name of the beast." In this lesson, how much wisdom is to be found! O that it were found by all! "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the

beast." Let him look back to ages past, and look around him to the present, on the multitude of opinions, which are advanced with assurance, as if they were the seal of redemption, essential to the salvation of the soul, and he shall find their numbers — the number of a man — corresponding to the varieties of the human mind. "And his number is six hundred and three score and six;" that is to say, not limited to a few, but very extensive, — just as our Saviour, in speaking of the duty of forgiving, mentions seventy times seven. The meaning I take to be this, that as man, though endowed with few original faculties, has such a power of multiplying ideas in his mind, by an infinite variety of combinations, as gives to every individual character a stamp of originality, the opinions, or doctrines, of which man is the author, will be found to vary as much from each other as man does from man. These opinions will be as numerous as the persons who are capable of

forming them; and the number of these is so great as to be represented by hundreds, and tens, and units. How humbling to human pride is this view of the perversion of human reason! How weak, how liable to err, is the best and wisest, when permitted to stray from the word of truth!

CHAP. XIV.

After describing the usurped power of the pretended rulers of the human conscience, who have endeavoured to impose their own crude conceptions, as articles of faith, and to substitute their vain inventions, in the room of the divine commandments, the Spirit of God, as if to console the Apostle for that view of the corruptions of the Gospel which had been exhibited, recals his attention to a scene fraught with comfort and consolation.

The Saviour of the world, described by the appropriate emblems of innocence and meekness, is seen on Mount Sion, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of his true disciples, "who had his Father's name written on their foreheads." Not the names of any church or any party, but (by their numbers) they who, of whatever church and of whatever party, had preserved their allegiance, and done homage to God alone. These are represented as rejoicing in their felicity, and sending forth the voice of praise and thanksgiving. Not by purity of faith alone are these blessed spirits characterized: for purity of life and conduct they are equally conspicuous; defiled by no sensual passions; following the precepts of the Gospel, and the example of their Saviour, at whatever price; and doing this with sincerity, "having no guile in their mouth, they are found without fault before the throne of God." What a heart-touching picture does this exhibit! May it have on

every heart the effect which it ought, undoubtedly, to produce, and which, in the mercy of God, it was intended to produce!

In the last chapter, we have seen the religion of Jesus disfigured by the corruptions of human passions and imaginations; and the preachers of these corruptions fiercely contending for dominion over the minds of men, and giving to themselves and their inventions, the glory, praise, and honour, which no human beings have any right to arrogate to themselves. Let us now observe the conduct of the preacher sent from heaven. How pure and simple are the doctrines set forth by this celestial missionary, 6th and 7th verses! How awful the denunciations pronounced by him who immediately follows! Babylon, the allegorical emblem of idolatry, is lamented over in the language of Isaiah. Idolatry is here, as I imagine, to be understood in a comprehensive sense, and as meaning the

undue reverence given to any thing that is merely of human invention. Those who set up these idols are not content with bowing the knee to them in private; it is their constant aim to compel others to the worship of the favourite idols of their imaginations: and it is for this bigotry and intolerance that vengeance is here denounced against them. Nor is it against the inventors of these idols that vengeance is here declared. All who permit the unhallowed passions, which are the mark of the beast, to have the rule over them, are here threatened with the divine displeasure. In the 10th and 11th verses, the dreadful effects of his wrath are described in terms so strong, as to excite the most lively terror. No visible calamity, no physical evil, is here described as the instruments of punishment; for these can only operate for a limited time, and within a certain space: but the smoke of *their* torment is said to ascend during a period of indefinite duration; for

thus the term *for ever and ever* is by the best authority interpreted. When we take a view of the history of Christianity from its first establishment, and behold the variety of systems and forms of doctrine which have been introduced, and to which the world has for a time done homage, we must be forcibly struck with the propriety of the emblems here used to describe the tormenting activity of the human imagination, exerting itself in vain and useless efforts to penetrate those mysteries which God has been pleased to veil in obscurity. This is the fire whose smoke, from the days of the apostles, even to the present day, has never ceased to ascend. They who make this unworthy use of what has been revealed, have no rest night nor day. It is impossible that they should either satisfy themselves or others with their speculations; yet they assert their dogmas as of equal authority with all that has been plainly and explicitly declared by divine inspiration.

The homage thus exacted, and thus paid, to human authority, is again designated "the mark of the beast." Here again it is opposed to the patience of the saints; — that patience with which the chosen servants of God submitted to wait for a full and explicit explanation of those mysteries which were but in part revealed, until God should see fit to withdraw the veil that hid them from their eyes. The holy ones, waiting with patience for the fulfilment of the promises, neglected not to obey his will: — "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." The blessing pronounced upon them extends beyond this world. A voice from heaven declares the blessing (v. 13.) in language which excites a glow in every Christian heart: — "Blessed are they which die in the Lord," &c.

V. 14. — Another scene is now opened, to which the declaration made in the last

verse may be considered as a prelude. One *like unto* the Son of Man appears on a *white cloud*, having on his head the insignia of sovereignty, and in his hand — not a sword, the instrument of vindictive wrath, but a sickle, the implement of the peaceful husbandman. An angel, or messenger from the temple, declares the time of harvest to be come. And he that sat on the cloud thrust his sickle on the earth; *and the earth was reaped.* How am I to understand this passage? If I have been right in my conjectures on the former part, the earth must here mean the natural state of man, opposed to the regenerated or spiritual state. The selfish passions, the follies, and delusions, which spring up, and become the food of the natural man, are, by the angel of righteousness, *cut down.* Our Saviour, during his personal abode on earth, may be said, by the doctrines he preached (which all inculcated that purity of heart, humility, and self-denial, which are necessarily de-

structive of the sinful passions), to have thrust his sickle on the earth. After he had finished his ministry, and ascended to glory, the corruptions, which are the growth of the depraved passions and appetites, were again assailed by the apostles and ministers of his word. These are here described, in the 17th verse, by the figure of an angel, or messenger, who "came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also *having* a sharp sickle." Inspired, or called on, by the Holy Ghost (the angel which had power over fire), the heaven-appointed messenger "thrust his sickle likewise into the earth, and gathered the *vine of the earth*, and cast it into the wine-press of the wrath of God."

This emblem of the vine is so frequently used by the prophets, as to be familiar to every reader of the Scriptures. Our Saviour adopts their figurative language, and calls himself the *true vine* which came down

from heaven. In opposition to this, *the vine of the earth* is here mentioned; and its destruction, as being offensive to God, declared in terms that are very strong and awful. Whether events may not, in the providence of God, occur, which shall throw new light on this, and many other passages, it is impossible to determine: but even with that light which the word of God bestows on one hand, and which experience and observation hold out on the other, we may here read a lesson of great importance. All that our Saviour, in the fifteenth chapter of St. John, declares, is here confirmed by a revelation, given from heaven after the period of his ascension. How much does it, then, behove us to examine our own hearts, words, and actions, to assure ourselves whether we belong to the vine that came down from heaven, or to the *vine of the earth*.

CHAP. XV.

Another allègorical picture is here exhibited. It is divided into two compartments, or distinct scenes. The first presents us with a view of seven angels, or preachers, assuming the form of divine messengers; but so far are they from following the example of our blessed Lord, "who went about doing good," that they do much evil. Their pernicious doctrines are of the nature of plagues, contagious and destructive. But they are described as the last of the kind that shall be permitted to appear; "for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

In the second compartment we have again a glimpse of the regions of purity and perpetual joy; and as an encouragement to hold fast the faith, and purity of heart, which, blessed be the spirit of God! conquers the temptations of the world, and

the corrupt influence of the passions, the blessed state of those "who have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his mark, and over the number of his name," is here set before us. It is, perhaps, not necessary to consider this description as alluding to the happiness of the just in a future state. It may with great propriety be applied to the truly pious and faithful servants of God in the present life. These having, by the divine assistance, subdued the selfishness and pride which sought to have dominion over them, and which enticed them to exert that zeal for some party, distinguished by a peculiar mark or denomination, which ought to have been devoted to God; and having got the victory over all the vain imaginations which seduced them, spend their days in thankfulness for the mercies they have experienced. Standing on the sea of glass, (an emblem denoting the pure and blameless tenor of their lives,) "and having harps in their

hands," (emblems of harmony and cheerfulness,) "they sing" (not the Anacreontics of natural religion, but) "the song of Moses and the Lamb." Impressed by a sense of the divine mercies, manifested through the whole series of revelation, they adore and glorify the providence of God; and in a firm dependence on the fulfilment of all his promises, they look forward, in faith, to that happy era, when all nations shall come and worship, and bow down before the God and Saviour of the human race.

V. 5th.—By the temple, the first object in this third compartment of the allegorical picture, I suppose to be meant the providence of God. It is from thence the dispensations are issued of good and evil. From that temple the seven angels mentioned in the first division are seen to proceed; and no sooner do they appear than they receive, from one of the four beasts, or sources of heathen superstition, vials

full of the wrath of God. By the smoke that ascends from these vials, the temple of the providence of God is clouded and obscured; and so great is the obscurity that rests upon it, as to render it inaccessible to every human being, until the seven plagues of the seven angels are fulfilled. When these pernicious disseminators of error shall have ceased to plague the earth, the smoke of the incense of their vials shall be dissipated, and Divine Providence shall no longer be shrouded in darkness, but seen and understood. How long it may be before the arrival of this happy era, it is in vain to conjecture: but that it will arrive is here promised; and never was any promise of God unaccomplished. Instead of indulging in vain conjectures about the time or manner in which this prophecy shall be fulfilled, let us, after the example of those who stand on the sea of glass, glorify God in the prospect of that universal happiness

which he has prepared for man, in the universal dissemination of light and truth.

CHAP. XVI.

In the last chapter we have had some notice of the seven angels, who bear in their hands the symbols of contagious error, whose direful effects are described in the strongest terms that imagination can conceive, viz. filling up the wrath of God: but, as if the view there given had not been sufficiently explicit to afford a warning to all men, the particulars are here set forth in terms so plain, that all who pay attention to the context must feel the meaning and importance of the prophecy, which is addressed to every member of the Christian church.

It was not until the doctrines of our holy religion had been corrupted by the vain imaginations of those who took upon them

to be the ministers and guardians of the Gospel, that the passions of pride, ambition, avarice, &c. (of which the beast—the monster that sprung from the sea of glass—is the proper emblem,) began to reign within the pale of the Christian church. These corruptions of the truth effected a great revolution in the Christian character. The word of God — the commandments, precepts, and example of our Saviour — were no longer the tests by which men judged of the spiritual state of the soul. Instead of this infallible criterion, each church, each sect and party erected a standard of its own, consisting of creeds and dogmas of human invention. To these the heart did homage; and being thus perverted, forsook the first and great commandment, worshipped the beast and his image, and received his mark. The beast, however, still boasted his origin, as having sprung from the source of purity and truth; and those who bore his name were still nomi-

nally Christians. The consequences of this departure from the pure rule of Christian doctrine are now to be exhibited. In the providence of God, the seven angels are sent forth to pour out the vials of wrath upon the earth. The first of those produced a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast: this sore was *discord*, the first evil that befel the church of Christ, after the admixture of human doctrine. The sea, or moral purity of the heart and conduct, was next assailed and corrupted. Quickly did the contagion spread; and that pure morality, which, on the first preaching of the Gospel, animated every heart, became so tainted as to be likened to the blood of a dead man. Nor was it the practice only that became corrupt; the rivers, or moral principles, were corrupted, and they too became blood — lost their essential and proper virtue, so as to be no longer wholesome.

True religion addresses itself to the affections; human doctrine addresses itself to the passions. The consequences must then, inevitably, be very different. The angel of the waters — the emblem of pure morality — perceives these consequences; but instead of bitterly inveighing against those who had poisoned the waters of life, he gives glory to God. Every view of the natural course of events, in the moral government of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, ought to inspire us with veneration, and lead our minds to just and pious reflections on the wisdom of Him whose judgments are all righteous and true.

V. 8th. — The fourth in order of those moral and spiritual plagues, which are to fulfil the wrath of God, darkens the sun of truth, and scorches or inflames the passions of men. The fifth encreases the contagious plague of darkness, until the misery it produces becomes intolerable. This misery,

this consciousness of being in a dark and comfortless state, ought to lead men back to the fountain of light: but when the emblematic beast has erected his empire, it produces no such effect. Discord, hatred, strife, and all the passions with which pride, ambition, and avarice have filled the professors of religion, instead of leading men to search the truth, to examine whether these evils be the genuine offspring of the religion of Jesus, lead them to deny the truth of revelation altogether, and thus to blaspheme God, because of their pains, and of their sores, while they, meantime, repent not of their deeds.

V. 12th. — By the great river Euphrates, on which the sixth vial is said to be poured, I suppose the corruption of some great moral principle to be represented. Humility is the fountain of all the Christian virtues. By the temporal power of the church humility was obliterated: "it was

dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." Out of the mouth of pride (the dragon) unclean spirits are seen to issue; and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, do they likewise come: for they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. The corruptions that proceed out of the mouth of pride seek an alliance with wordly greatness: nor do the proud and worldly minded ever fail to crawl to temporal authority for support. But what is the end of the apparent triumph which the deformed spirits that proceed from pride thus enjoy? or what do the kings of the earth gain by receiving them? We here learn, that by these spirits of devils they are gathered to the battle of that great day of God Almighty! This is surely a serious consideration. By the kings of the

earth, all temporal exaltation that becomes the object of ambition is here described. On that exaltation how much, alas! do we set our hearts!—how much does it bias and influence our judgments! Yet we know that temporal power is but of momentary duration; and that, were we exalted ever so high in honour or renown, it cannot, for a moment, ward off the inevitable hour, whose secret steps approach silent as the midnight plunderer. To the heart that is occupied by the concerns of the world, the appearance of death must be very dreadful. Blessed is he that watcheth, that keepeth himself free from all entanglements with the spirits of pride and ambition, and who has the garments of holiness always girt fast around him, in a state of preparation for the call of his Master. Supposing that we give another interpretation to the 12th verse, or rather bestow on it a more particular consideration. What, or who are "the kings of the east," for whom a way

was made, by drying up the great Christian virtue, humility? May they not, with peculiar propriety, be considered as emblems of sensuality and voluptuousness? This historical view of the corruptions which have, like so many contagious disorders, infected the Christian world, and spread disease and misery through those regions which, but for their baleful influence, would have been blessed in all the enjoyments of the spiritual life, will then appear to be as follows: —

By the first who departed from the pure simplicity of the Gospel, and imposed their own peculiar doctrines and opinions as the word of truth, discord was introduced into the Christian church. The moral precepts of the Gospel were next set aside; and purity and holiness ceased to be the characteristics of believers. By the promulgation of false doctrines, the light of revelation was darkened, and vice and misery

were the consequences. False representations of the Deity, by which his attributes of justice, and holiness, and mercy, were blasphemed, followed in course; and humility, which, while it maintained an influence in the hearts of believers, preserved the votaries of religion from the contagion of vice and folly, was at length exploded. Pure morality and Christian humility being dried up, by the scorching rays of worldly principles, a way was prepared for sensuality and voluptuousness.

From pride and selfishness — the corrupt principles of our fallen nature — proceeded the impure and corrupt affections and desires, which go forth and cling to the objects of worldly honour and worldly glory. In this state of the Christian world the seventh angel appears, and pours his vial into the air — pollutes the element most essentially subservient to the preservation of life. I am diffident of my own judgment

in interpreting this: but am strongly disposed to consider "the air" as the emblem of reason; and this elemental principle of the life of the soul, as perverted by the false and dangerous principles of sceptical philosophy. These fill the measure of those evils which oppose the light of revelation; and, if I am right in my conjecture, the voice has already issued from the temple of God's Providence, saying, "*It is done.*"

Extraordinary and awful are the phenomena that immediately follow, and which are represented as productive of consequences the most striking and important. The *city*, emblem of those false principles which have been the strong-holds of pride and presumption, is now to be divided; and in its fall, all that the vain imaginations of men have built upon the foundation of the Gospel, is to be involved. These islands, which human ingenuity has reared—

these mountains, which human invention has piled — are then to disappear; by special judgments from God are they to be destroyed. But, alas! these judgments will not convince the sinner of the evil of his ways. In this destruction of all that human invention has added to the truth, they will not see the hand of God; but will again, by their false representations, blaspheme the Divine Majesty; and this because the evils under which they suffer are very universal.

Whether the great events which are now taking place in the world, may not, by the providence of God, be made instrumental to this great and signal change, is a very serious consideration. To Him, in whom are the issues of life and death, let us in all events submit ourselves, in full confidence that he will not cease to be gracious to those who seek him in sincerity, and

that none who put their trust in him shall be desolate.

CHAP. XVII.

All those corruptions of the truth which have infected the imagination, and given activity to those passions which Christ has taught us to subdue, having been fully described; the evangelical prophet proceeds to give a view of the misery and destruction to which all who have been tainted by these plagues shall be subjected. By the angel of Providence, he is called to witness the judgment of that spirit of idolatry, with which all nations have been more or less infected. Had the worship of images been the only species of idolatry against which judgment was to be denounced, the description would have been given in terms far less comprehensive: but the species of idolatry here mentioned, is one with which all the inhabiters of the

earth have been intoxicated. What party, what sect or denomination of Christians, has been without its favourite idol, (the workmanship of human invention,) to the advancement of whose honour and interest, it has devoted all the powers of the understanding, and all the passions of the heart. In defence of the truth of revelation, no sword has ever yet been unsheathed. When the heart is inspired with the love of God, as the first and ruling principle, no tincture of malignity mingles with its zeal: but when we make gods of any peculiar doctrine, founded on the particular views taken by erring and fallible mortals, our zeal becomes like the source from which it sprung, impure; it is wrathful and vindictive. Never was there a zealot, of any sect or party, who would not, in the spirit of the king of Babylon, send forth a decree to all the world to bow down before the golden image which he set up, under the pain of being thrown into the fiery furnace. This

is the inevitable consequence of substituting the opinions of man for the commands of God. Nor are the opinions which have been most zealously and most bitterly contended for, the fair deductions of human reason. The objects of them are removed beyond the limited sphere of reason; but where reason fails, imagination supplies the deficiency. The combinations it forms, are monstrous and unintelligible. They are described in terms to which no clear ideas can possibly be affixed; but these terms become the idols of the party that adopts them, and which assumes to itself the power of imposing them as the test of being in the favour of God, and heirs of salvation. These are the monsters who, from the time that the pure word of truth was first corrupted by the mixture of human doctrine, have through every age, worn the insignia of dignity and dominion. These have been arrayed in colours of purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and

pearls (the glories of this world). The cup which they have held forth has been of the pure gold of true religion; but instead of being filled with the genuine fruits of the true vine that came down from heaven, it has been filled with abominations and filthiness, proceeding from the species of idolatry above described. Upon the head of this anomalous monster is written, "Mystery. Babylon. The Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth." It is this wretched and perverted zeal which has drank of the blood of the saints, and of the blood of the martyrs, even to intoxication. The holy apostle and companion of our Lord, on viewing the scenes of slaughter produced by that spirit of intolerance which had now taken possession of those who professed the Gospel of peace, wondered—"wondered with great admiration!" Well might he wonder that the gospel which he had preached should ever be converted into a pretext for letting loose the passions

of cruelty, hatred, and revenge! The angel of Providence explains the mystery which had excited his astonishment, by showing him that the spirit of idolatry, to which all the world had been subjected, which was, in truth, the corrupt principle of human nature, had reigned without control until the appearance of the Messiah. It "was" "and is not," (i. e. at the time that the apostle wrote,) for then it had been by the influence of the Holy Ghost, subdued, but though subdued, it was not conquered; and should, when men departed from the fountain of living waters, ascend from the bottomless pit of human depravity, "and go into perdition." "And they that live upon the earth," — they who have not received the pure religion of Christ, but only seen it in this monstrous form, shall wonder when they behold the spirit of wickedness which was manifested by the heathens; but which all acknowledged to have been annihilated in those who first witnessed the

truth of the Gospel, again animating the breasts of men professing themselves Christians. The mind that hath wisdom will behold human opinions rising into mountains by multitudes of adherents, and exerting power and dominion over the minds of men, and extending their influence by their alliance with secular power. Whatever form these opinions assume when supported by the selfish passions, they have one mind, and give their power and strength to the same corrupt principle. They "make war upon the Lamb"—the meek and holy spirit inculcated by the Redeemer: but (praised be the God of mercies!) "the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is the Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." By the very honours and dignities which these human authorities have assumed, shall they, in the providence of God, be destroyed. These honours and distinctions shall be their ruin, but pure religion does not

immediately rise upon their fall. Those who are permitted to be the instruments of destruction, to all that pride and ambition have substituted in the place of pûre religion, will, it is here declared, "give their kingdom unto the beast" (the emblem of heathen idolatry) until the words of God be fulfilled. When the ruin of any established form of religion is produced by its own corruptions, pagan principles are declared by this prophecy to be those which will immediately be built upon its ruins. Instead of triumphing in the fall of any peculiar form of error, we ought to watch and pray, lest we fall into temptation. It is not the dominion, or the power, or the might, of any *human opinion* that shall finally prevail; but *the power of the Lamb.*

CHAP. XVIII.

The scene which now opens is declared to exhibit events that are, in the order of time, to be subsequent to all that the prophet has hitherto described. These events are still in the womb of futurity; and, therefore, it behoves us to be very diffident in interpreting them: nor is it possible for us to draw the veil aside one hair's breadth further than the prophet has been permitted to withdraw it. It is, then, to the general tenor of the events in question, and not to the method of accomplishing them, that we must direct our attention.

In the first place, a minister of God, *having great power*, such power, perhaps, as was bestowed on the first apostles, is to make his appearance on the earth, and to enlighten its darkness, — perhaps, to spread the knowledge of the Gospel through its darkest regions. This heaven-sent mes-

senger is to denounce the destruction of all those heresies and corruptions, false principles, and erroneous opinions, which have led to vice and immorality. The objects that are represented in connection with those that are to be destroyed are objects of primary regard to all men of the world. The zeal with which the ministers of religion have endeavoured to support the parties to which they have attached themselves has often led them so far astray from the pure precepts of the Gospel, that it is the rich and great alone that seem the sole objects of their care. By getting the kings of the earth, persons in power and authority, to embrace their opinions, they attain riches and honours, and the gratification of ambition. But this state of things is to have an end: and those who live in this delusion are warned to flee from it, and assured of the miserable consequences that must ensue from putting trust and confidence in the stability of that worldly prosperity, for the

attainment of which they had made so many sacrifices. The language in which Isaiah so emphatically describes the destruction of Babylon — the seat of heathen superstition and idolatry — is here made use of, to describe the misery to which the spiritual idolatry, so often mentioned, shall most certainly be doomed. This misery may, doubtless, by some signal dispensation of Providence, be rendered universal: but to every individual who makes the good things of this world the primary objects of regard, it must, sooner or later, be said, "The fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which are dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all." From what follows, it would, indeed, appear, that the judgment of God on these false and fatal principles was to be evinced by some great and striking event, — an event, or series of events, which is to produce great sorrow and universal humilia-

tion. For "with violence shall that great city be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." Nor shall spiritual idolatry, when, in the providence of God, it has been extirpated, ever more revive or flourish. By its sorceries have all nations been deceived; and that deception has given birth to intolerance and persecution, hatred, malice, and cruelty. In her — in zeal for establishing as eternal truths the doctrines of human and fallible men — shall be found "the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

CHAP. XIX.

"After these things" — after the destruction of these false principles — the apostle, in prophetic vision, hears "a great voice of much people in heaven," i. e. belonging to the heavenly kingdom, rendering thanks to God, for those signal dispensations of his providence which had

taken place upon the earth. To this act of praise, a responsive voice is heard, saying, "Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." May we not infer, that from this happy period it is to God alone that the homage of every heart will be paid? The voice of multitudes will no longer be raised in praise of this or that peculiar opinion or favourite theory, but saying, "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." It is then, and not till then, that the Messiah will be truly united to the church. For this union, the church, or professors of religion, will have prepared. And what is this preparation? *The righteousness of saints.* That this might be noted by those to whom the Gospel was in future ages to be preached, the prophet is desired by the angel of Providence *to write*, — to secure the preservation of the testimony he was about to utter to the latest posterity. That testimony is a blessing, — a blessing pronounced on those

who are called to that union of righteousness and the pure faith of the Gospel, which is called "the marriage-supper of the Lamb." The angel further affirms, that "those are the true sayings of God."

From first to last, throughout the whole of the revealed will of God, it is on the union of piety and morality, of faith and righteousness, that the blessing of heaven is pronounced. It is in vain that we expect this blessing on any other terms. These are the true sayings of God; deeply ought they to sink into every human heart.

An instructive example is in the succeeding passage set before us (v. 10.). The apostle, in the weakness of human nature, which, when the warmth of admiration has been excited, is ever ready to do homage to the instrument or minister of Providence, falls at the feet of his heavenly instructor to worship him; but instead of being encou-

raged, by having this flattering testimony of approbation received with complacency, he is checked by the messenger of God, who reminds him that he is but his fellow-servant, and that God alone is the sole object of worship and adoration. How different is this conduct of the angel from that which is the result of human pride! How ready, alas! are we to receive from our fellow-servants the homage of praise and honour, and to raise ourselves above them, on account of the smallest advantages we possess, either natural or acquired; and how ready, on the other hand, to worship those whom we acknowledge as our instructors, and in the blindness of our admiration to forget that they are but our fellow-servants!

From the 11th verse downward, we have an obscure and mystical representation of the judgments which await the victims of those errors and corruptions, which have in

former visions been so forcibly described. The attributes here given to the Messiah, are those of justice, righteousness, and truth. On his head are the insignia of universal dominion. So far his divine character is plainly revealed to us; but his nature is here declared to be above our comprehension, — "*He had a name written that no one knew, but he himself;*" "He was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood;" (evidently alluding to his having assumed the human nature, and in that character) "His name is called the Word of God." His followers are clothed, not with peculiar doctrines or opinions, but with holiness and purity. V. 15. By the sword of the Spirit, he and his followers combat the empire of sin. V. 16. His universal sovereignty is displayed and acknowledged. *Truth*, the angel which stands in the sun, calls on all the earth to behold the utter destruction of all the false and absurd doctrines and superstitions which had hitherto prevailed

and corrupted the heart of man. Their destruction is not, however, effected without a conflict. Pride, and falsehood, and all the sensual passions and corrupt principles which had been nourished by error, are gathered in array against the word of God. They are, however, finally subdued, "and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." That this strong image is intended to describe the anguish of an awakened conscience, is evident from what follows (v. 21.), where we are told, that the remnant, the remaining principles of corruption, the errors and prejudices which still adhere to those who have been brought into subjection by the King of kings and Lord of lords, shall be subdued by the sword which proceeded out of his mouth — the revealed will of God.

Whether any sensible demonstration of the power of God, to be hereafter displayed in events of an extraordinary nature, may

be alluded to in this description, it were fruitless to conjecture. The description is of universal application, and contains a lesson universally useful. Do we cherish in our hearts desires and affections which the word of God condemns, we are here assured that they will lead to inevitable misery. We see, likewise, that the prevalence of error and corruption will not serve us as an excuse; that if we join with the multitude in the worship of the beast, and of his image, we shall with the multitude be punished; that if we would be true followers of the sovereign to whom we have vowed allegiance, we must put on the robes of righteousness and purity of life — the white linen of the saints; and that, after having been awakened to a sense of our own guilt and misery, and made a sacrifice of every glaring vice, we must search the word of God, and pray for the influence of his Spirit, that the remainder of the errors and sins that cleave to us may be subdued.

CHAP. XX.

Though God has seen fit, in his wisdom, to deny to the human mind the power of penetrating into futurity, he has, in every revelation of his will, been pleased, in some degree, to lift the veil which hides the knowledge of all future events, and to seal the mission of his inspired servants, by such discoveries of what shall be hereafter, as may serve as a testimony to their truth and faithfulness.

Of the purity of life and manners which distinguished the early converts to Christianity, we have such undoubted evidence, that it has never been called in question even by infidels. Had St. John been left to the natural workings of the human mind, he would, doubtless, have been animated with the delightful hopes of the further fruits that were to spring from those precious seeds of gospel truth, which

he had been instrumental in planting, and which had hitherto been so productive. The miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost still continued to be enjoyed by him and his fellow-labourers. Was it natural for him to imagine that these would be speedily withdrawn? By the spirit of prophecy alone could he foretell it; and that spirit was from God. The corruptions that were to follow were such as human penetration could never have foreseen. They are, in this book, described to take place in the very order in which they did take place. And why have they been delineated? Not to prevent the progress of these errors and corruptions; for we know that they have actually been permitted by Providence to operate exactly as the Apostle foretold they would; but to afford to believers, to the end of time, an assurance, that every promise of God should be fulfilled. With regard to those that yet remain to be

accomplished, it is not permitted us to penetrate fully into the particular manner of their accomplishment. It is to the general tenor that we must confine our views. From the first part of this chapter we may learn, that after the gospel of Christ shall have been universally received, a degree of purity, hitherto unknown, shall for a time prevail. The principle of evil shall for a time be restrained; but the restraint shall not be perpetual: it shall again be loosed for a season, but, finally, shall be destroyed. How these events are to be brought about is no concern of ours: the accomplishment of them will confirm the truth of this prophecy to ages that are remote from ours; and, in proportion as they are removed, in point of time, from that era when life and immortality sprung to light, become so clear and evident, as to support the faith, and confirm the hopes, of all who have received the word of truth.

These events, important as they may be, are but a prelude to one in which all ages are alike interested. To this great and solemn event the Prophet directs our eyes. While he describes it in language divested of all ornament, and by figures familiar to every mind, its sublimity is rendered more apparent, than if it had been arrayed in all the pomp of rhetoric. What, indeed, can imagination conceive equal to the sublimity of that image, which describes the heavens and the earth fleeing from before the face of the throne of God?—That throne, before which the dead, small and great, shall stand to be judged *according to their works.* Again is this rule of judgment declared in the next verse, when, in prophetic vision, the Apostle saw "the sea give up the dead that were in it; and death and hell deliver up the dead which were in them: *and they were to be judged every man according to his works.*"

If the allegorical figures of the sea, and death, and hell, are to be interpreted as in the foregoing passages, we are to consider the sea as the emblem of the moral principle, and death and hell as the emblems of the corrupt and sinful passions. Under the dominion of one or other of these, all who have not had access to the Scriptures have lived and died. These, we are assured, are to be judged according to the degree of light they enjoyed, and not according to that which was withheld from them: they were judged according to their works. It is by their works, likewise, that the Christian is to be judged; but not by them alone. On looking back to the 12th verse, we find that, besides the books of judgment which the Prophet saw opened, "*another book was opened*, which is the book of life," (the revealed will of God,) "and the dead were judged according to those things which were written in the books, — *according to their works.*" These

books, which are to be opened at the day of judgment, are now open to me, and to my fellow-Christians. We are here by the Holy Ghost informed, that it is not according to the explanations we give to certain obscure or mysterious passages that we are to be judged, but according to the degree in which the doctrines of truth and righteousness have influenced our conduct. To what solemn reflections on the tenor of our past lives does this important intelligence lead! How deeply ought it to influence our conduct! It is not death and hell alone, — not only the corrupt and vicious, that shall be cast into the lake of fire, but whosoever is not found written in the book of life! Of the nature of what is written in that book, we have been already informed in the 14th chapter, when, after alluding to the "patience of the saints who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus," the Prophet "heard a voice from heaven, saying,

Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." The blessing is confirmed by a yea, and amen: but, lest any should warp the sense of this blessing, so as to confine it to those who embrace any peculiar opinions or modes of faith, it is added, as a cause of the blessing, that "their works do follow them." These two passages mutually explain each other; and both accord with the whole tenor of our Saviour's doctrine, and embrace the full extent of all his promises.

CHAP. XXI.

When things of a spiritual nature are to be described by sensible objects, they must, of course, lose much of their sublimity: but as in our present state we can receive ideas through no other medium than the senses, it is to sensible objects that spiritual must of necessity be compared, however they may be injured by

the comparison. Magnificent, indeed, are the objects presented to our imagination, in this view of things, that are to be hereafter; — "the heavens and the earth passing away," and, in their stead, a "new heaven and a new earth," are objects of no ordinary interest. They indicate a total change to take place under a future dispensation, a change in which they whose names are written in the book of life shall, doubtless, rejoice with exceeding joy. Blessed in the sensible manifestation of the divine presence, they shall no longer be subject to those evils which, in the present state, all are, in some shape, doomed to experience. Divine grace, "the fountain of the water of life," will then be dispensed freely: but still, even under this new dispensation, it will not be dispensed to those who seek it not. It is still *to him that is athirst* that the promise is confined: nor does it appear that temptations to sin are yet to be dormant. "He that overcometh shall in-

herit all things; but the fearful, and unbelieving, and wicked, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death!"

The various vices which spring from idolatry, or the corrupt principle, having in former passages been described by the figure of a great city, the same figure is very properly made use of to describe the predominance of the opposite virtues, which proceed from the principle of faith in Christ — a principle which, under the new heavens and the new earth, is to appear in splendour. The images by which this pure state is represented are selected from the objects that are deemed most precious; but the most remarkable part of it is the absence of those modes of faith, under which the various denominations of Christians are now accustomed to assemble. Institutions, which in our present weak and imperfect state are absolutely necessary to

keep alive the spirit of piety and devotion, will then be of no further use: a continual sense of the Divine Presence will then dwell upon the mind: we shall have no need of instruction in those truths which have been as a sun to enlighten our paths, when the glory of God, and of the Lamb, shall in full splendour shine upon our hearts. Nor shall we then experience the pain of seeing others walk in darkness, while we ourselves enjoy the blessings of light. "All the nations of them which are saved," shall walk in the light of the celestial glory; "and the kings of the earth," —all who are distinguished by peculiar excellence— instead of taking glory to themselves, shall give it unto him to whom alone all praise, and honour, and adoration is for ever due. From this pure and happy state all immorality, all the sensual appetites, and selfish passions, are to be excluded; nor are they to be permitted to lead the blessed into temptation. The

moral purity of this region of felicity is, in the 22d chapter, described by appropriate emblems — *a pure river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.* This seems to imply an accession of gifts and faculties far superior in their nature to those which we now enjoy. These heavenly endowments give nourishment to that tree of life, that root of immortality, whose fruits are described as various, and abundant, and succeeding each other in perpetual succession. In this principle of immortality we have, from the subsequent passage, some room to hope that all will in the end be provided with means of salvation. "Its leaves are for the healing of the nations." Misery shall then be no more: there shall be no more curse, no more experience of the consequences of that fatal transgression, which was the means of sinking the nature of man, and alienating the heart from God: but the throne of God and of the Lamb

shall be in it, *and his servants shall serve him.* In the present imperfect state of man, our best services are necessarily imperfect: we can only aim at serving him; but if we do so now with sincerity, we shall be enabled, in a purer and more perfect state, to serve him without ceasing, and to serve no other God beside him. "These sayings are faithful and true;" and it is the Lord God of the holy prophets by whom the knowledge of these things has been revealed to us. Soon shall we have complete experience of their truth. Quickly does the hour approach that shall bring conviction to every human heart. "Blessed," said the angel of God, "blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book:" a blessing which would have been quite nugatory and absurd, had the *sayings* or tenor of the prophecy not been of a practical nature. In seeking to discover, in the sayings of this prophecy, the temporal changes that are to

take place in the kingdoms of this world, we cannot be said to *keep*, or to observe them as governing principles of conduct. In the sayings of this prophecy we learn, that we are to be judged according to our works; not according to outward events, in which we are no way concerned, which we may never live to see, and which, when they arrive, can only affect the temporal happiness of the individuals who are actors in the scene.

Though a knowledge of the precise day on which a conquest is to be obtained over the Turks, or any other people, were to be communicated by a revelation from heaven, what influence would it have upon my conduct? But if, by Divine Revelation, I am put upon my guard, by being forewarned of the peculiar nature of temptations to which I and all the Christian world are to be, at different periods, exposed, the end and purpose of such revelation is evidently

salutary and beneficial. Let me then consider all that is written in the book of this prophecy as a lesson, of which I may make a real and practical use. In the 8th verse the beloved disciple reiterates the assurance of his having received the instruction he has conveyed in mystic vision, not in a dream or trance, but in full possession of all his faculties, and all his senses. At the conclusion of this scene, he again fell down to worship at the feet of the heavenly messenger, and was again prohibited in the same peremptory manner as before. Here we have a most conclusive argument against the homage which has been so frequently exacted, and so readily paid to those who are of our brethren the prophets, and who are fallible, and liable to err as ourselves. For the truths in which they instruct us, our gratitude should be paid to the Divine Author of all instruction; and, instead of leading us to contend for their superiority, should produce in us the true

spirit of devotion, reverence, and gratitude to our God. The angel, after refusing the homage of the Apostle, desires him not to seal the sayings of this prophecy, as if the events declared belonged to a far distant period; but assures him that the time when they should begin to be accomplished was at hand. The influence of the Holy Spirit, as manifested by miraculous gifts and endowments, would shortly be withdrawn. Those who had withstood the testimony of the apostles, though accompanied by such evident proofs of a divine mission, would then have no chance of conversion. Those who had been converted would remain firm in the faith which leads to righteousness and holiness. They would each have their reward.

The Almighty again speaking from his throne, pronounces a blessing on those who do his commandments. This blessing is spoken by him who is the FIRST AND THE

LAST. It is the sum and tenor of Revelation from beginning to end. Nor is the blessing inconsequential; it brings with it the right to immortality, "that they may have *right* to the tree of life, and enter in *through the gates* into the city." By the Saviour of the world have these gates been thrown open. He is *the way, the door* which leads to life eternal.

V. 15. — In the description of those who are refused admittance, we do not find the honest, though misled advocate for any peculiar doctrine; but the sensual, the profane, the wicked, and the deceitful.

Our Saviour seals the testimony of the angel, by an avowal of his having been sent by him to testify these things in the churches. He, the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star by whose light we are illuminated, testifieth to these things. The Holy Ghost, the spirit

which leads to all truth, conjures us to receive the testimony of Jesus. He and the church of Christ say, "Come." And let him that heareth, him that is persuaded of the truth of all that is here testified, not only come himself, but exhort others to come to the fountain of living waters, and "let him that is athirst, take of the water of life, and drink freely."

Awful is the prohibition against adding to these things. The nature of the peril to be incurred is worthy of consideration. "God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." This, of itself, is sufficient to show that these plagues are not of a temporal, but of a spiritual nature. They affect not the health or prosperity of the outward state; but the health and well-being of the soul. We add to this book — we add to divine revelation, when we promulgate our own theories and explanations, as of equal authority to that of Scripture.

In this proceeding, into which pride seduced the hearers of the word, all the plagues *that are written in this book* originated. It is by thus *adding to these things*, that the bitter passions have been engendered, which have had such a baleful influence in obscuring the light of the Gospel, and kindling in its room the torch of strife. These plagues have been added to all who have thus endeavoured to add to the words of this book: but for those who shall "take away from the words of the book of this prophecy," a more dreadful punishment is reserved. To take away from the words of this prophecy, is to deny what has been revealed by God. To deny that the word of God alone is the word of salvation: to take away, or cancel the commandments that have been issued, and the promises that have been made, and the judgments that have been denounced by the spirit of Almighty God; whoever dares thus to act, "God shall take away his part

out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book!" May the Father of mercies, and the spirit of his grace, save and deliver us from incurring this great condemnation!

V. 20th. "He that testifieth these things."—In the 13th verse, testimony was given by the Father; in the 16th verse, by the Son; and in the 17th, by the Holy Ghost: here it is said in the singular, *he*, not *they*; but "HE which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Even so come Lord Jesus!"

Well might the holy Apostle who had been so highly favoured, hail with joy the promised coming of his Lord and Master! But the devout ejaculation with which he concludes refers not, as I think, to the glorious coming of our Lord to judgment, but to his providential fulfilment of all that had been shown in the prophetic vision.

The commencement of that series of circumstances or events, which were in the course of providence to befal the Christian church, is described by our Saviour to be at hand. They were for the most part of a very melancholy nature, and the feelings which the contemplation of them could not fail to excite in the Apostle, must have been to him infinitely more distressing than any that could have arisen from the foreknowledge of a calamity merely personal. He had witnessed the triumph of the Gospel, had seen the light that beamed from it suddenly illumine the mental darkness of the heathen, and melt the obdurate bigotry of the Jews. It was natural for him to conclude, that the blessed and propitious change which had, in a few years, been wrought in the hearts of multitudes, would, in process of time, be wrought in the hearts of all. That all the ancient prophecies concerning the reign of the Messiah, and the establishment of his

universal dominion, would be speedily accomplished, and that justice would cover the earth like a garment, and righteousness and peace dwell among men to the latest generations. How fatal to these hopes was the view afforded him by the Almighty disposer of events, "of the things which should come hereafter!" By those passions which the word of God had for a time restrained, the truths which he had been called to preach (and to which he had borne witness) were to be darkened. Misery and disorder were to prevail in consequence. Idolatry and superstition, and worldly mindedness, and pride, and cruelty, and all the vices which had deformed the heathen world, were again to appear, and to fight, and to overcome, and to banish the pure light of truth from the world. All this was very horrible: but in mercy to the Apostle, in mercy to us, to whom these words are spoken, the heavenly vision did not close here; brighter prospects were displayed;

once more the Saviour of the world asserts his sovereignty. Against all that oppose him he finally prevails; and the triumph of righteousness, though removed to a distant period, is assured as certain. Fixing our minds on these glorious hopes, shall we not say to the misery which in the course of providence precedes them, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"

Thy will be done; not according to my weak and foolish hopes, but according to thy divine wisdom.

THE END.

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